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THE AMAZING DUCHESS



*Elizabeth Chudleigh
(afterwards Duchess of Kingston)*

THE AMAZING DUCHESS

*BEING THE ROMANTIC HISTORY OF
ELIZABETH CHUDLER*

MAID OF HONOUR, THE HON. MRS. HERVEY,
DUCHESS OF KINGSTON, AND COUNTESS OF
BRISTOL

By CHARLES E. PEARCE

AUTHOR OF "I HAVE SEEN IT," "THE LITTLE WOMAN OF THE LARK,"
"THE BEAUTIFUL PRINCESS," "AND OTHER STORIES."

WITH THIRTY-EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS
INCLUDING TWO PHOTOGRAVURES

IN TWO VOLUMES
VOL. I

New York
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TO
MY FRIEND
ALFRED H. MILES

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INTRODUCTION

“**S**HE was imperious, she was light-minded, (she was flighty, she was false, she had no reverence in her character, but—she was brilliant and lively in talk ; she could no more help using her eyes than the sun can help shining, and setting those it shines on a-burning.

“Part of her coquetry may have come from her position about the Court, where the beautiful maid of honour was the light about which a thousand beaux came and fluttered ; where she was sure to have a ring of admirers around her, crowding to listen to her repartees as much as to admire her beauty ; and where she spoke and listened to much free talk, such as one never would have thought the lips or ears of Rachel Castlewood’s daughter would have uttered or heard.”

Thus wrote Thackeray of Beatrix Esmond, having in his mind the wayward, the puzzling, the elusive Elizabeth Chudleigh. One could wish that the great satirist of men and manners had, with the vivid pen which drew the terrible picture of a very different woman—one, indeed, quite unworthy of his genius, the infamous Catherine Hayes—been tempted to bring

THE AMAZING DUCHESS

CHAPTER I

The Chudleighs of Devonshire—Elizabeth Chudleigh's birth—Colonel Thomas Chudleigh and Chelsea Hospital—The Hospital two centuries ago—The South Sea delirium of 1720—Elizabeth's childhood at Chelsea Hospital—The notabilities of Chelsea—The profligate Duke of Wharton and Dolly Walpole—A hotbed of scandal—The morals of the Court—The "Maypole" and the "Elephant"—Death of Colonel Chudleigh—1720-26.

ELIZABETH CHUDLEIGH, the fascinating, the witty, the adventurous, the reckless, the most-talked-of woman for at least one half of the eighteenth century, came of a good old Devon stock, centred in the neighbourhood of Chudleigh, nine miles west of Exeter. Chudleigh was once a thriving market-town, identified with the manufacture of the tough and hard-wearing fabric known as West of England cloth. It is now a placid, sleepy little place, famous for nothing in particular, unless it be its apple-orchards, and with but half the population it could boast of seventy years ago.

The estate of the Chudleigh family was at Asheton, four miles from the town. Love of hard fighting ran in the blood of the men, and the women had the large, lustrous eyes, alternately bold and melting, defiant yet alluring, the dark lashes and brows, the exquisite

complexion, and the full red lips of the typical Devon beauty. Elizabeth inherited the fighting capacity of the one and the piquant loveliness of the other.

Some of the Chudleighs assisted in repelling the attack of the Spanish Armada. Sir George Chudleigh, Elizabeth's grandfather, and his third son, Colonel James Chudleigh, took up arms for King Charles in the stirring times of the Parliamentary rebellion, but afterwards went over to Cromwell. Perhaps they preferred to be on the winning side.

Sir George Chudleigh and his wife were not happy in their married life. The lady had a sharp tongue, and her mental activity found an outlet in literature, chiefly of a didactic character. The Rev. Mr. Sprint, who had the temerity to preach a sermon on "Conjugal Duty," met a doughty antagonist in Lady Chudleigh, who replied to him vigorously, and in verse. The poem, entitled "The Ladies' Defence," made a considerable stir at the time, and was considered of sufficient merit to be included in "Poems of Eminent Ladies," reprinted in 1755. If Lady Chudleigh did not transmit her literary tastes to her granddaughter, it is pretty certain Elizabeth inherited the lady's energy, her combativeness, her courage, and her quick wit.

Lady Chudleigh's son Thomas entered the army, as most lads of quality did in those days, and in due course fought under the Duke of Marlborough throughout his continental campaigns. As a reward for these services, Colonel Chudleigh was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Chelsea Hospital, then a much more onerous post than it is now.

Colonel Chudleigh took up his duties at Chelsea Hospital in 1715, soon after George of Hanover was called to the throne of England, and, on settling down in his post, purchased a small property in the parish of Hartford, about twelve miles from Plymouth. Meanwhile he had married. His wife was also a Chudleigh, belonging to a branch of the family living at Chalmington House, Dorset; thus it may be fairly assumed that the strongly marked characteristics of the Chudleighs were accentuated in the baby-girl who was born to the gallant soldier.

Some doubt exists as to the exact date of Elizabeth's birth. Until Mr. Baring Gould investigated the matter all the biographers fixed the interesting event as happening in 1720, and, in spite of Mr. Gould's researches, we are inclined, for reasons which will be seen later on, to support the earlier authorities.

Equally uncertain is Elizabeth's birthplace. It can hardly have been at Chelsea, for the parish register contains no record of the young lady's entry into the world, and, had she been born within the precincts of the Hospital, the birth of a daughter to the Lieutenant-Governor could scarcely have escaped official notice. Moreover, it was the fashion in those days for the lady who was anticipating motherhood to choose some fitting place of retirement in the country in which to "welcome the little stranger." Does not Sterne make Mr. Shandy insist upon his wife arranging affairs so that Tristram should be born in the country, and does she not take "measures accordingly"?

One can easily understand Colonel Chudleigh preferring that a domestic episode of such delicacy should

happen at any place rather than his official residence. The Hospital at that time was regarded as a military station, and the pensioners were obliged to mount guard and perform other garrison duties. In addition, a certain number of men were appointed to act as a patrol on the road from Buckingham House to Chelsea, on account of the swarms of footpads who infested the neighbourhood. There was also a small corps of "Light Horsemen," chosen out of the various regiments of cavalry located there, ready at call when required for military duties. Thanks to the numerous wars, the Hospital was always full of pensioners, and there were also over twenty thousand out-pensioners who drew their money every six months; in many cases having to hand over every penny of it to the hungry moneylenders, from whom they had borrowed in advance of the payment, at exorbitant rates of usury. All this must have given plenty of work to the Lieutenant-Governor, to say nothing of his own monetary troubles which were at that time accumulating, and it was only natural that he should diminish as much as possible the further anxiety which marriage had entailed upon him.

In the absence, then, of direct evidence to the contrary it is not unreasonable to suppose that Elizabeth was born at her father's house in Devonshire. If so, it is pretty certain that when the news arrived at Chelsea Hospital the gallant Lieutenant-Governor was congratulated heartily by his brother officers, and that the health of the little lady was drunk in the hearty fashion of the eighteenth century, when nothing could be done without cracking a bottle.

The year 1720 was a memorable one for England. It saw the bursting of the South Sea Bubble and the consequent ruin of thousands of credulous people. The mania for blind speculation which made this possible reached its climax in August 1720, and, despite the joy and satisfaction which Elizabeth's safe entry into the world must have given her father, it is more than probable that in the gallant colonel's agitation of mind the birth of a daughter loomed less largely in his mind than the fluctuations of the South Sea stock, for unhappily he was among the victims.

But for the peace which followed the accession of George of Hanover to the throne of England, it is possible that the nation would never have gone mad over the insidious scheme of the ingenious and unscrupulous scrivener, Sir John Blunt. In the year 1720 England, for a wonder, was not at loggerheads with any continental nation. The Spanish War was over, and George had, the year before, concluded a peace with the Queen of Sweden. The British arms took a very small share in King George's little war with that country, but the British tax-payer's share was not quite so small. Troops brought from Germany to assist in putting down the Jacobite disaffection in England had to be paid for, in addition to those engaged by the King to fight the Swedes—ostensibly in the service of England, but really for the benefit of Germany. Everybody was glad when the King, on November 23rd, 1719, opened Parliament with a speech in which he said that all Europe, as well as Great Britain, was on the point of being delivered from the calamities of war. The country was heartily sick of French wars, Spanish

wars, Dutch wars. It wanted to settle down to make money quickly, and everybody believed the opportunity had come and was within the reach of all.

This opportunity was provided by the cunning, plausible Blunt, who, taking a hint from John Law and his famous Mississippi scheme, formed the South Sea Company, with the result that, while the King was involved in a labyrinth of diplomatic negotiations, his English subjects were yielding to the delirium of a gigantic gamble. Few could resist the fever, and it is not surprising that Colonel Chudleigh, with thousands of others, plunged into the whirlpool of speculation.

Such was the greediness and credulity of the public that some wags opened a pretended office in 'Change Alley, to receive subscriptions for raising a million sterling. The people flocked in, paid five shillings for every thousand they subscribed, and were afterwards informed by advertisement that they might have their money returned without deduction, as the speculation was only a ruse to see how many fools could be caught in one day. One of the most famous bubbles was "Puckle's Machine Company, for discharging round and square cannon-balls and bullets," and it is computed that the total amount sought for carrying out various more or less absurd projects was upwards of three hundred millions sterling.

The crash came—thousands found themselves ruined, or in straitened circumstances. Among the latter was Colonel Chudleigh. Our army "swore terribly in Flanders," and the military language was not less terrible at home, when the Parliamentary inquiry

Chelsea Hospital and its Surroundings 23

revealed that an enormous amount of money had gone in bribes. From Aislabie, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, down to the King's rapacious German mistresses, every one whose mouth it was considered advisable to close, or whose favour it was necessary to gain, received his or her share of the plunder.

Colonel Chudleigh did his best to economise. He could not afford to keep up his house at Hartford, but he does not appear to have sold it, as Elizabeth stayed there in her teens, and, according to one biographer, was in possession of the property for some years. Mrs. Chudleigh lived in the Hospital quarters, and Elizabeth spent six years within the precincts of the Hospital, the pet of the pensioners, the delight and torment of her father and mother. Her precocity, her winning ways, her pretty caprices, her inborn coquetry, her pride and love of command—"a proud, imperious child," one historian calls her—were the talk of the place. We may be sure there were not many children in the Hospital, and if there had been Elizabeth Chudleigh would probably still have been the favourite.

As though fate had marked out her future, it so happened that Chelsea Hospital at that time was surrounded by the residences of noble families, with whom the pretty daughter of the Lieutenant-Governor was destined in after-life to be more or less associated.

There was Beaufort House, originally called Chelsea House, once the home of Sir Thomas More, the great Chancellor, the rigid persecutor of heretics, the author of "Utopia," and the patron of the arts and friend of

Holbein, who occupied rooms in his house for three years. Beaufort House in the seventeenth century came into the possession of the Earl of Bristol. It was an Earl of Bristol, though of another family, who by an unlucky chance crossed the path of Elizabeth Chudleigh and influenced the whole of her eventful life. Later on Beaufort House was the residence of Lucy, dowager-duchess of Rutland, stepmother of the Marquis of Granby, who years after was the neighbour of our heroine when she resided at Kingston House, Knightsbridge. The dowager-duchess was quite a type of the gossiping letter-writer of the eighteenth century. When any one brought in what in these days would be termed a sensational story she would bid her daughter go in the next room and write it down. "But, madam," the girl would cry, "it can't be true." "What does that matter, child? It will do to send into the country," was the lady's answer.

Overlooking the Thames somewhere across the present Oakley Street was the Bishop of Winchester's palace. This building was erected in the reign of Charles I. by James, Duke of Hamilton, an ancestor of the young duke whom Elizabeth certainly would have married but for her unfortunate meeting with Augustus John Hervey, afterwards Earl of Bristol.

Close to Battersea Bridge stood Lindsey House. The son of the third Earl of Lindsey was made Duke of Ancaster in 1715, and the son of this duke was one of the most fervent admirers of Elizabeth, remaining staunch to her even when the freshness of her beauty

had departed and her reputation had been touched by scandal.

Adjoining the grounds of Chelsea Hospital was the estate of Lord Ranelagh, "the vainest old fool I ever saw," said Swift, himself for some few years a resident in Chelsea. Fool though he may have been in some respects, Lord Ranelagh was a remarkably shrewd man of business. In 1690, the year when the Hospital was completed, his lordship obtained from the King a lease of seven acres of the land which had been purchased for the institution, and eight years after he not only secured a grant in fee of his seven acres, but also of twenty acres more, part of the hospital land, for the paltry rent of £5 a year! These twenty-seven acres were afterwards celebrated as the Ranelagh Gardens, and here in after-years Elizabeth Chudleigh and other Court ladies loved to take their pleasure. When the hospital grounds required extension its purchases were nearly all from the Ranelagh estate. In 1826 the small piece of ground on which the Rotunda had stood was sold to the hospital authorities for £9,000. On the whole, the Ranelagh family did very well out of the shrewdness of "the vainest old fool" Swift ever saw.

But the house which Elizabeth must have best remembered when she grew to womanhood was a stately, red-bricked mansion not many yards from the western wing of the Hospital. There was never a more observant child than Elizabeth Chudleigh, and the striking face and figure of Sir Robert Walpole, who lived here for some years, must have impressed itself upon her memory. The lively and cynical

Horace at that time was a handsome little boy, with flowing curls, and it is not unlikely that Elizabeth, young as she was, made eyes at him.

A frequent visitor of the great Sir Robert, with the smooth, heavy Georgian face, the ponderous double chin, and the long white hair—a face that suggested good living and heavy drinking—was the lively Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. Lady Mary was the aunt of the future Duke of Kingston, of whose sense the witty lady had no very high opinion. Could she have foreseen that the fascinating little Elizabeth Chudleigh, who amused her so much, was one day to go through the ceremony of marriage with her nephew we should have had some expression of opinion from her more forcible than refined. Lady Mary never minced her words if she saw her way to a smart reply. It was Lady Mary who, at the French Opera, being reproached with having dirty hands, replied: “Ah, si vous voyiez mes pieds!” But the authority for this is Horace Walpole, and he hated her.

In the grounds of Sir Robert's house, Elizabeth many a time romped with Horace Walpole. The gardens were beautifully laid out with conservatories, a summer-house, and a grotto. No nobleman's gardens were complete in those days without a grotto or a mound of rockwork in the centre of a big lawn. One Girardin, in an essay on gardening, furnishes a “specification,” or perhaps it may with more appropriateness be called a recipe, for this particular kind of horticultural adornment. “Take a mountain,” he writes, “break it into pieces with a hammer, number the fragments and observe their antecedent positions; place them in

their original order, cover the junctures with mould ; plant ivy and grass and weeds which will hide the fractures, and so you may have a cartload of Snowden or Penmenmaur in the middle of your bowling-green and no soul will suspect that it did not grow there." This is the version given by Horace Walpole, who no doubt infused into the translation some of his own vivacious spirit.

In the early part of the eighteenth century nothing was so acceptable in the way of conversation as the discussion of a scandal, and the quick ears of little Elizabeth must have taken in talk which to-day would not be considered either instructive or edifying, at least for one of her tender years. Stories of Lord Wharton, who had a fine house and grounds at Chelsea, and of Lady Wharton, furnished very appetising dishes of gossip. "Lady Wharton," said Swift, "spent Sundays in gambling and her weekdays in open intrigues." The dean's caustic tongue did not spare her love for displaying her charms. "I saw Lady Wharton," he writes on one occasion, "as ugly as the devil, coming out of the crowd all in an undress." On her husband Swift was equally severe. "Lord Wharton is without the sense of shame or glory, as some men are without the sense of smelling." Elsewhere, speaking of this exceptional couple, he cynically observes that his lordship "bore her gallantries with the indifference of a stoic."

Shameless and callous as the age was on the subject of morals, one is loth to believe in the truth of the insinuation cast at Lady Wharton as to her motive in gaining an ascendancy over Dolly Walpole, Sir Robert's

sister. Dolly was anything but happy at her brother's house in Chelsea. Lady Walpole, an empty, coquettish, affected, extravagant woman, chose to be jealous of Dolly, as indeed she was of most things in which her husband took a personal interest. Dolly, who had had a love disappointment, found consolation in the sympathy of Lady Wharton. Dolly knew nothing of the profligacy of Lord Wharton or of the questionable reputation of her ladyship, and, seizing the opportunity when Sir Robert was absent from home, she, after a violent scene with her sister-in-law, ran to Lady Wharton and took refuge in her house.

The danger was evident. "The behaviour of the duke," to quote Swift again, "was like that of a young man of five-and-twenty, and, though he has some years passed his grand climacteric, he shows no traces of age in mind." Lord Wharton's character was so infamous, and his lady's complaisant subserviency so notorious, that no young woman could remain under their roof with safety to her reputation.

The news reached Sir Robert, at that time Mr. Walpole, and in a towering passion he posted off to Lord Wharton's house. A furious tug of the hanging bell-pull and a thundering knock at the door told of his agitation and rage. Lord Wharton, the dissolute septuagenarian, whom Lady Mary in good round fashion called "the most profligate, infamous, and shameless of men," lacked the courage to face the irate brother, and, ignominiously creeping out of the house by the back door, left his better half to face the visitor. She got by far the worst of the encounter. Sir Robert Walpole always had a stock of vigorous language at his

Horace Walpole and Carr, Lord Hervey 29

command, and he told her ladyship what he thought of her in terms she could hardly have misunderstood. This done he carried Dolly off in triumph to his house in Norfolk.

Scandal was attached to the birth of Horace Walpole, rumour assigning his parentage on one side, not to his reputed father, but to Carr, Lord Hervey, whose standard of morals reached no great altitude. Carr was half-brother to John Augustus Hervey, the father of Elizabeth's future husband, and in after-years the Countess of Bristol must have thought often of the coincidence which led her, as a child, to be the playmate of the pretty little boy who, if rumour was to be believed, was really by marriage her cousin. Lady Louisa Stuart, in her introductory observations to Lord Wharnccliffe's edition of the works of her grandmother, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, asserts that Carr was notoriously the father of Horace Walpole. Croker, in his preface to John Lord Hervey's graphic memoirs of George II., says: "The resemblance of Horace to that remarkable family" (*i.e.* the Herveys), "whose peculiar originality of mind and character gave rise to Lady Mary's division of the human species into 'Men, Women, and Herveys,' is very striking." Lady Louisa Stuart's words are significant: "A number of children, young Walpole being one, were accustomed to meet and play together. Such of them as, like himself, lived to grow old all united in declaring that no other boy within their knowledge was left so entirely in the hands of his mother or seemed to have so little acquaintance with his father."

Sir Robert Walpole, the big and burly, the man who "governed Britain with a little Latin" (he understood very few words of German, and the King was as unfamiliar with English; thus they could only speak through a dead language), did not observe a too rigid code of morals. His name was associated, without any need of blushing, with Molly Skerret, one of Queen Caroline's maids of honour, whom, on the death of Lady Walpole, he married.

The natural air of Chelsea was in these days remarkably pure and sweet, with its open country, its hayfields and market-gardens, and the noble river where salmon still sported and made sport; but the same could not be said of its moral atmosphere. The influence on the receptive mind of a precocious and quick-witted child of constant frivolity and pleasure-seeking, of scandal and gross stories, to say nothing of the foul language indulged in by the upper classes, can readily be imagined. There was really very little reverence for anything—not even for bishops! Bishop Atterbury, of Rochester, was hauled off to the Tower in 1722 on a charge of high treason, and arrested, as he was, at his house in Chelsea, the episode must have caused some talk in the neighbourhood.

The Court set no good example to the people. George of Hanover never took to England, to the people, or their ways. He was always escaping to Hanover, leaving the government in the hands of his ministers. The Court, such as it was, he left to be dominated by Madame Schulemburg (in England the Duchess of Kendal), from her attenuated figure

designated the "Maypole," assisted by Madame Kielmansegge, as fat as the Schulemburg was lean, and termed the "Elephant" in consequence.

The life was dull enough when the King was "in residence" in St. James's Palace. Sumptuous apartments had been given to the "Maypole" and the "Elephant," and here George would spend his evenings at solemn games of cards, enlivened with coarse jokes. Both these ladies were true daughters of the horse-leech, especially Schulemburg. Nothing came amiss to the "Maypole." She grabbed everything. She has already been mentioned as taking bribes wholesale over the South Sea Bubble, and a still more glaring instance of her greed was seen when the Duke of Somerset resigned the Mastership of the Horse. The "Maypole" coolly proposed that the office should be left vacant, and the revenues, worth £7,500 a year, handed over to her; and the King, who was completely under her thumb, actually consented!

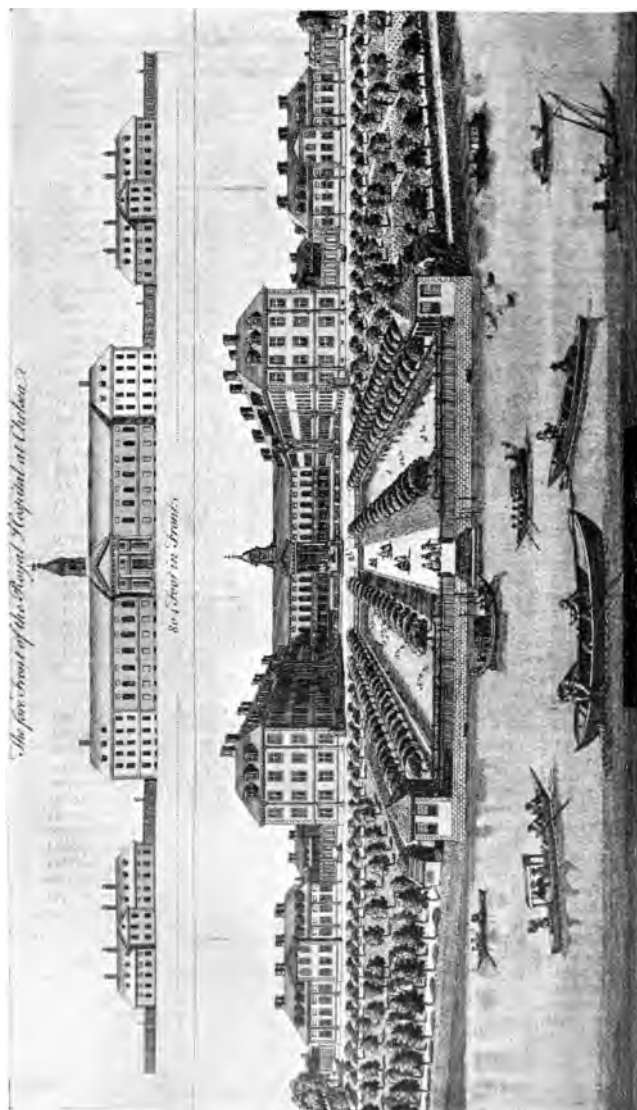
The German surroundings were thoroughly hated, not on account of their want of morality, but because of their rapacity and ugliness. Once when the Schulemburg was taking the air in a coach the mob surrounded the vehicle and hooted and jeered. The "Maypole" showed her painted face at the window and called out in her bad English: "Goot pippel, what for you abuse us? We come for all your goots." "Yes, damn ye!" shouted a fellow in the crowd, "and for all our chattels too."

The Princess Caroline of Wales was the only one of the royal circle who was at all popular. She and

her husband were at variance with his father, the King, and so set up a rival Court, first at Leicester House and afterwards at Hampton Court, an example followed by his son Frederick years after. At the Prince of Wales's Court all was pleasure and gaiety. The two beautiful maids of honour, Molly Lepel and Mary Bellenden, were the reigning toasts, and their charms were celebrated in verse, sometimes not too refined, after the fashion of the period.

The wits and beaux gathered round the Princess, among them the courtly Earl of Chesterfield—Dr. Johnson's Chesterfield—then a young man. One day the Princess, talking of the raddled, painted face of the "Elephant," remarked: "She looks young—if one may judge from her complexion, not more than eighteen or twenty." "Yes, madam," replied Chesterfield, "eighteen or twenty stone." There was the gallant Earl of Peterborough, a rumoured lover of the Princess, but who received no encouragement from her; and the effeminate Lord Hervey, with the painted face, destined to be the father-in-law of Elizabeth Chudleigh.

From the Prince downwards everybody, save the Princess, who was studiously inclined, occupied their time with the frivolities of fashion—dress, card-playing, and love-making. The Prince pursued the lively Mary Bellenden with his addresses, and in his coarse way once counted out his money as a hint how the young lady might get rid of her debts if she would only look upon him with favour. Mary Bellenden was not one to be insulted. She knocked the purse from the Prince's hands and the coins fell jingling to



CHELSEA HOSPITAL IN 1720

the ground. But the Prince did not confine his attentions to one lady. Mrs. Howard, afterwards the Countess of Suffolk of his kingly days, was in high favour. Lady Walpole, moreover, did not escape scandal, which there is reason to believe had some foundation.

Succeeding the financial crash of 1720, a wave of penitence came over fashionable society. The House of Lords professed itself seriously concerned at the "growth of atheism, profaneness, and immorality," and a bill was brought in for "suppressing blasphemy and profaneness." It will be noticed that "immorality" was left untouched. Perhaps their lordships thought the task of making the nation moral was beyond their power. One noble lord, with not too high a reputation for straightness of conduct, was of opinion that the calamity occasioned by the South Sea project was a judgment of God on the blasphemy and profaneness of the nation ; on which Lord Onslow remarked : "The noble peer must, then, be a great sinner, for he has lost considerably by the South Sea scheme." The Duke of Wharton, famous for his wit as well as profligacy, opposed the bill because he conceived it to be repugnant to the Holy Scriptures, and, in support of his irony, produced an old family Bible and quoted several passages from the Epistles. The fit of repentance soon passed, the bill was postponed, never to be proceeded with, and the beaux and belles put off sack-cloth and ashes and went back to diamond shoe-buckles and brocaded satin.

While at Hampton Court the Princess was constantly riding over to Chelsea, and she continued her

visits after the reconciliation with the King, when she and the Prince went back to Leicester House and subsequently to Richmond. The Princess Caroline was fond of patronising men of letters and science. She was a constant visitor to the Botanical Gardens at Chelsea, under the charge of Sir Hans Sloane, and now and again called at the Hospital, where she must have seen Elizabeth Chudleigh, whose destiny it was, years after, when the Princess had become Queen of England, to attract the notice of her royal husband.

The end of Elizabeth's six years of happy child-life at Chelsea Hospital came with the death of her father. The funeral, of course, was accompanied by all the observances then considered indispensable on such occasions. The friends and relatives of the deceased, invited to attend, received deep black-edged cards decorated with death's-heads, cross-bones, and anything else the fancy of the undertaker might suggest. The corpse had to lie in state—this fashion was observed in all classes of society—yellow wax tapers in sconces dimly lighted the room, and the walls were hung with black cloth. The mourners were regaled with claret, ale, cakes and biscuits, while black gloves and mourning-rings were distributed.

Mrs. Chudleigh was probably spared the expense of providing the sorrowing friends with whole suits of solemn black, and, as the funeral did not take place at night, frequently the custom at that time, she did not have to incur the outlay for torches and flambeaux men, but it is certain the funeral obsequies cost her money she could ill afford. Her husband was in debt

to the end of his days, and it is doubtful whether her loss was solaced by a pension. She and her daughter quitted the Hospital without much more than the good wishes of friends to help them. Years after, when, as will be seen, Elizabeth took up her residence temporarily at Chelsea, it was for a reason as secret as it was embarrassing.

CHAPTER II

Mrs. Chudleigh's struggles in London—Elizabeth's education—Anne Brett—A squabble in St. James's Palace—The King's tragic death—The Coronation of George II.—Awkward predicament of the ladies—Elizabeth Chudleigh in the country—Her meeting with Pulteney—Pulteney's interest in her—Her portrait painted by Reynolds—Pulteney introduces her to the Princess of Wales—Elizabeth appointed maid of honour to the Princess—The bitterness of eighteenth-century quarrels.

MRS. CHUDLEIGH was a woman of courage and decision, and both qualities were displayed in an adventure such as was frequently experienced by travellers in the eighteenth century. The road between London and Chelsea was infested with highwaymen and footpads, a circumstance which, as we have seen, led to the raising of a patrol from the pensioners of the Hospital to guard the wayfarer on the road. In spite of these precautions, however, a carriage followed by a couple of patrols and containing the wife of the Lieutenant-Governor, was on one occasion, stopped by three footpads. One of these presented a pistol at Mrs. Chudleigh, but the lady was in no wise dismayed. Putting her head out of the opposite window, she called out "Fire!" The patrols immediately obeyed the word of command, and one of the ruffians was shot. "The daughter does not degenerate," says Horace

Walpole, alluding to the incident at a time when Elizabeth required her mother's courage.

Mrs. Chudleigh certainly needed all her energy when she was thrown on her own resources by the death of her husband, and that energy did not fail her. The lady, as one biographer puts it in somewhat redundant phraseology, "thus narrowed in fortune, prudently availed herself of the best substitute for money—good connections. These the rank, situation, and habits of her husband had placed within her power. She hired a house, fit at that less refined period of time for a fashionable town residence, and she accommodated an inmate, for the purpose of adding to the scantiness of her income." In other words, she took a "paying guest."

Sharp and shrewd, Mrs. Chudleigh for a time kept things going, and that without neglecting her daughter's education, or what passed for education in those days. The course of female instruction in the early part of the eighteenth century began at eight years old, and ended soon after fifteen, or at latest sixteen. What is now taught as a matter of routine came then under the head of "accomplishments." Some slight proficiency in the "poetry of motion," a little vocal and instrumental music, perhaps, or a smattering of a foreign language, comprised the curriculum. In addition, a young lady would have imparted to her as much knowledge of "accmpts" as would enable her later on to compute with accuracy her gains and losses at hazard or faro tables. Any lady of *ton* at that time who could read tolerably well and write legibly her own name was set down, by all whose opinion was worth

having, as a learned woman. If she was further equal to the feat of putting together a letter without outrageously violating the ordinary rules of syntax, she was proclaimed to be nothing short of accomplished. Once she had left school, her chief aim was to display what attractions she possessed to the best possible advantage, and to contract a marriage with some person of quality without delay.

It is more than doubtful whether Elizabeth was either studious or obedient. She did not in the least resemble her grandmother, the Lady Chudleigh of poetic fame. Mr. Pulteney, in the early part of his career the most popular statesman of his day, a man of intelligence and of cultivated mind, found her sorely deficient when he made her acquaintance at the turning-point of her career. As for obedience, her emphatic expression, "I should hate myself if I were in the same mind for two hours together," uttered in reply to one of her many admirers who reproached her for her faithlessness, is a sufficient proof that at school she must have been a "pickle."

There was really much excuse for indifference to books. London life at that time was very animated. It was picturesque and full of colour, and there was enough excitement and amusement in actualities to make reading, save to the student, almost superfluous. The fierce light that beats upon the throne enabled quite humble people to talk of the doings of princes and princesses with familiarity if not intimate knowledge, and as Mrs. Chudleigh's "fashionable town residence" was probably not far from Leicester House, "the pouting-place of princes," as Pennant called it, in

allusion to the refuge it afforded to the successive Princes of Wales at variance with their fathers, little Elizabeth had ample opportunities of hearing more than enough of the scandal of the day. While Prince George and the Princess Caroline occupied Leicester House, Elizabeth's mother and Elizabeth herself never lost touch with the Court circle, and the fashionable functions, the gaiety, and the gossip must have been much more to the taste of the young lady than poring over dry educational literature.

Elizabeth was at school when a great and unexpected event happened. George I. died suddenly. The circumstances surrounding the death of the first George possess all the elements of tragedy and comedy. For thirty-three years the King had kept his wife, Sophia Dorothea, a close prisoner at Ahlden. Whatever may have been the faults and indiscretions of the unhappy Dorothea, her husband treated her with a savage brutality for which there was no justification. When she died in her prison the only announcement her husband would permit was a notice in *The London Gazette* that the "Duchess of Ahlden" had died. Mourning was strictly forbidden, and on the day the King received the news he went to the theatre, attended by Madames Schulemburg and Kielmansegge—a piece of ostentatious effrontery which must have disgusted his English subjects, even used as they were to his Majesty's callousness.

While the King was thus flaunting himself and his mistresses at the theatre, however, his mind was uneasy. George, like the majority of people at that time, high and low, was very superstitious. Some old

fortune-teller had prophesied that he would not survive his wife a year, and the haunting dread lest this prophecy should prove true was ever in his mind. To distract his thoughts, he took a new mistress, a handsome girl of a Spanish type of beauty, whose good looks must have made the "Maypole" and "Elephant" mad with envy. The brunette was Anne Brett, daughter of the divorced Countess of Macclesfield, the unnatural mother of Richard Savage, the poet.

Soon after Mistress Brett was installed in St. James's Palace, the King set out for Hanover, and the new favourite began to give herself airs. Sure of her position, seeing that she had already been given ample allowance and had been promised a title and a coronet when the King should return from Germany, the lady issued her orders as though she were already mistress of the Palace. Her apartments adjoined those of the King's granddaughters, the Princesses Anne, Amelia, and Caroline, and, without asking their permission, she ordered a doorway leading into the garden, which had been bricked up for some reason, to be reopened. The Princess Anne was not one to put up with this presumption, and sent workmen to replace the brickwork. A furious quarrel was well on its way when the news of the King's death arrived. Anne Brett's disappointment was keen. Every one believed the King would live for another twenty years, and the young lady looked forward to lining her purse as the "Maypole" and the "Elephant" had lined theirs. Her castle in the air was completely shattered, and she was speedily given notice to quit.

The Duchess of Kendal's Superstition 43

When the details of the King's death arrived there were not wanting many who said a judgment had fallen upon him. Four days after leaving England he landed in Holland, and posted to Delden, on the German frontier. As his carriage drew up at the inn where he intended to pass the night a letter was thrown into the carriage. The King's face changed. He recognised the writing. It was that of his dead wife, Sophia Dorothea, written a few days before her death. She had never ceased, during her imprisonment, to bombard him with letters, and this was the last. Like the rest, the letter was full of bitter reproaches for the cruelty he had shown towards her. It also reminded him of the prophecy. When the King sat down to supper that night he was alternately furious, despondent, terrified. He tried to drown his fears with gorging and hard drinking. Soon after his heavy supper he had a fit, but he recovered, and his attendants urged him to go to bed and rest. But no. "To Osnaburg! to Osnaburg!" was his death-cry, as indeed it proved to be, for on his arrival at the old Hanoverian town he breathed his last.

The monarch's superstition was not confined to the fortune-teller's prophecy. In a tender mood he promised the Duchess of Kendal that, if she survived him, and it were possible for the dead to return to this world, he would make her a visit. The duchess, on his death, was so convinced the departed monarch would keep his word that she persuaded herself that a large raven which chanced to fly into one of the windows of her villa at Isleworth was the soul of the departed.

All these stories, however, were matters of ordinary gossip, soon to be forgotten in the stir and excitement of the coronation of George II., which followed a few months later. In all probability Mrs. Chudleigh, thanks to her influential friends, obtained seats for herself and her daughter in Westminster Hall, where the ceremony took place, and here she must have met many whom she had known at Chelsea, possibly among them the sober and sedate Mr. William Pulteney, destined years later to influence Elizabeth's career in a marked degree. It is reasonable to conceive that Mrs. Chudleigh had some slight acquaintance with the great rival of Sir Robert Walpole, as Sir Robert and he were great friends during the time Colonel Chudleigh held his post at Chelsea, when the Chudleighs were constantly visiting Walpole's house.

The fine dresses of the Court ladies, the magnificent robes worn by Queen Caroline, would not fail to rouse the interest if not the envy of little Elizabeth, and maybe she dreamed of their glories for many a night afterwards. If the girl could have lifted the veil that hid from her the future she would have seen herself fifty years later, once more in Westminster Hall, not as a passive spectator, but as the principal actor, the central figure, in a drama exciting intense interest throughout the whole of England, talked of for years after and forming one of the most striking *causes célèbres* in the history of the peerage.

It is probable, however, that no thought of the future troubled the child's light heart on the day of the Coronation. The brilliant picture presented by the Queen was in itself sufficiently absorbing. Her

Majesty that day was dazzling. Besides her own jewels, which were numerous and valuable, she had on her head and shoulders all the pearls she could borrow of the ladies of quality at one end of the town, and on her petticoat all the diamonds she could hire of the Jews and jewellers at the other. The jewels on this garment alone were valued at nearly a quarter of a million, and no such sight had been seen before.

The enthusiastic admiration of Elizabeth did not extend to other spectators of the gorgeous sight. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's inclination to ridicule everything and everybody ran riot. Her description is delightfully piquant.

"I saw the procession much at my ease," she writes, "with a house filled with my own company, and then got into Westminster Hall without much trouble, where it was very entertaining to observe the variety of airs that all meant the same thing. The business of every walker there was to conceal vanity and give admiration. For these purposes some languished and others strutted ; but a visible satisfaction was diffused over every countenance as soon as the coronet was clapped on the head. But she that drew the greater number of eyes was indisputably Lady Orkney. She exposed, behind, a mixture of fat and wrinkles, and before a very considerable protuberance, which preceded her. Add to this the inestimable roll of her eyes, and her grey hairs, which by good fortune stood directly upright, and 'tis impossible to imagine a more delightful spectacle. She had embellished all this with considerable magnificence, which made her

one of the largest things of God's making, if my Lady St. John had not displayed all her charms in honour of the day. The poor Duchess of Montrose crept along with a dozen black snakes playing round her face, and my Lady Portland (who is fallen away since her dismissal from Court) represented very finely an Egyptian mummy, embroidered over with hieroglyphics. In general, I could not perceive but that the old were as well pleased as the young ; and I, who dread growing wise more than anything else in the world, was overjoyed to find that one can never outlive one's vanity."

The gossiping and lively Mrs. Delany, in a letter to Mrs. Anne Granville, is more charitable. Though the sprightly lady must have been sorely inconvenienced she seems to have been pleased with everything.

"The Queen," she says, "was never so well liked ; her clothes were extravagantly fine, though they did not make show enough for the occasion, but she walked gracefully and smiled on all as she passed by. . . . I could hardly see the King, for he walked so much *under* his canopy that he was almost hid from me by the people that surrounded him ; but, though the Queen was also under a canopy, she walked so forward that she was distinguished by everybody. The room was finely illuminated, and though there were eighteen hundred candles, besides what were on the tables, they were lighted in less than three minutes by an invention of Mr. Heidegger's, which succeeded to the admiration of all spectators ; the branches that held the candles were all gilt, and in the form of

pyramids. I leave it to your lively imagination, after this, to have a notion of the splendour of the place so filled and so illuminated. I forgot to tell you Lady Carteret looked charming, and nothing was ever more beautiful than her fine throat, which appeared to the utmost advantage. I went with Mrs. Garland, a particular friend of my Lady Cathcart's, and one of a general acquaintance. We went to the Hall at half an hour after four in the morning ; but when we came the doors were not opened, and we were forced to go into a coffee-house and staid till the doors opened, which at half an hour after seven they brought us word they were. We then sallied forth with a grenadier for our guide ; he conveyed us into so violent a crowd that for some minutes I lost my breath (and my cloak, I doubt, for ever). I verily believe I should have been squeezed as flat as a pancake if Providence had not sent Mr. Edward Stanley to my relief, and he, being a person of some authority, made way for me, and I got to a good place in the Hall without any other damage than a few bruises on my arms and the loss of my cloak ; and extremely frightened with the mob—so much that all I saw was a poor recompense for what my spirits had suffered.

“I got home without any accident about ten of the clock at night. It was not disagreeable to be taken notice of by one's acquaintance when they appeared to so much advantage, for everybody I knew came under the place where I sate to offer me meat and drink, which was drawn up from below into the galleries by baskets at the end of a long string, which they filled with cold meat and bread, sweetmeats, and wine.”

The unconventionality of the eighteenth century is certainly one of its charms.

No one at that time thought of losing anything by not asking for it, and the first George set the example systematically. To Sir Robert Walpole has been attributed the cynicism that "All men have their price." According to Archdeacon Coxe, however, Sir Robert's expression was not quite so sweeping. His words were, "All *those* men have their price," and he spoke them in allusion to his opponents—no new discovery in politics. If the widow of the Lieutenant-Governor met any of her influential friends with whom she was intimate at Chelsea it is quite certain, business and energetic woman as she was, that she did not let the opportunity go by of asking them to help her. Pulteney at that time, however, was probably too deeply engrossed in political intrigue to concern himself with Mrs. Chudleigh's affairs, or with her pretty and engaging little daughter; her time of fascination was to come some sixteen years later. For the moment Pulteney was trying to buy the King in opposition to Sir Robert; and George II., on his accession to the throne, was practically put up for auction. He was surrounded by unblushing place-getters, and the party leaders did not scruple to bid against each other for his favour. Pulteney offered his Majesty £800,000, an offer which Lord Hervey stigmatised "as most infamous for the bidder"; but, considering that the offer made by Sir Robert Walpole amounted to £900,000, Pulteney's limit must be considered exceedingly moderate. George, it is said, would have liked more, but had the sense to see that it was

impossible to get it. Walpole had also an enormous advantage over his rival in the fact that Pulteney could not guarantee that the House of Commons would sanction his estimate, Walpole, on the other hand, being sure of his following. Whatever arguments Lord Hervey may have had in his mind when he stigmatised Pulteney's offer as "infamous," it is most likely that what he wrote was inspired by his hatred for the man, for which he certainly had reasons.

For the next ten years Mrs. Chudleigh struggled hard to make both ends meet. It may be doubted whether Elizabeth, after leaving school at the age of sixteen, helped her mother much beyond making herself agreeable—when she was in the mood—to the "inmate" of the house for the time being.

Elizabeth was now in the full flush of girlish beauty, and had already begun to show that superb assurance which never deserted her to her last days. She had a few love-affairs—some of them mere schoolgirl flirtations—amatory trifles which amused her but never touched her deeply. Elizabeth's head was far too level for entanglements. Had any of her suitors been rich or highly placed, the young lady might have taken a different view, but none approached the ideal husband she had pictured to herself.

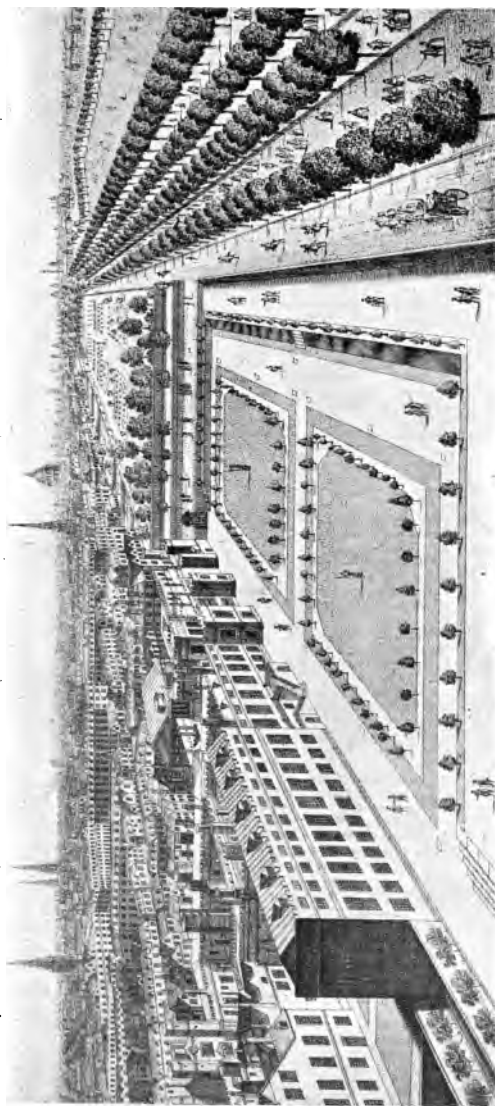
There seemed indeed little chance of this. In the rush for the favours of royalty, Mrs. Chudleigh found she was being pushed aside. Her old friends had enough to do to look after their own interests, since the conflict between the Courts of St. James and Leicester House demanded considerable tact on the

part of those who wished to stand well with both. Mrs. Chudleigh, to the disgust of Elizabeth, who was longing to play an active part in the fray, kept herself in the background, and at last announced her intention of relinquishing her "fashionable town residence" for the retirement and peace of a country life.

Elizabeth, it may be presumed, had all the will and energy to cut herself adrift from her mother and look after herself in London, but she was far too shrewd a young person to commit a folly of this kind. Still there is no knowing what she might have been tempted to do had not the unexpected happened in the shape of an attack of smallpox. There was nothing wonderful in this. Nearly everybody came within touch of this terrible scourge, in spite of the supposed preventative by inoculation, introduced by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu from Turkey. In Elizabeth's case the attack was very mild, and left no traces behind. But it decided the question of London *versus* the country; the town house had to be given up, and mother and daughter went into the country, most likely to the little property in Devonshire.

The country squires were of little less interest to the capricious beauty than were the London gallants. She simply provoked them to love-sickness and laughed. Secretly she pined for promenades in the Mall, for the gaieties of Vauxhall, for routs, ridottos, masquerades; and we may imagine that at times she provoked her mother with her vapours and moods.

Assuming that Elizabeth was born in 1720, she must



ST. JAMES'S PALACE, 1720

at this time have been at her best, and probably had reached her twenty-first year. The description which has been given of her personal appearance is somewhat meagre, but it is sufficient to enable one to say, with something like certainty, that she was neither divinely tall nor divinely fair, but a little under the middle height and inclined to plumpness, with exceedingly bright eyes and mobile features. She had little of the goddess and plenty of the woman, and her charm lay, not in her beauty, but in her piquant expression, her varied moods, and her fascinating manner. She had a temper, and one can conceive that when put out she did not take refuge in the chilly silence of a stately beauty. Whether the story that Pulteney met her while out shooting is correct does not matter very much. It is quite possible the statesman may have gone to Devonshire to recuperate after a somewhat long and severe illness he had about this time. Concerning this illness we are told that the amount Pulteney paid the Court physicians was regarded as enormous and exceptional, amounting as it did to seven hundred guineas. The chronicler goes on gravely to say that the physicians did the patient no good, and that he cured himself by taking a draught of small beer! But maybe sarcasm underlies this remarkable statement, which is probably one of the many shafts directed against the statesman who, despite his vast wealth, had always an eye for economy.

Though Pulteney has been termed the "reputed lover" of Elizabeth Chudleigh there is little or no evidence to indicate that he regarded her otherwise than as an amusing companion. Elderly beaux are

wont to take a strong interest in lively young ladies. His close friendship with Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu when he became Earl of Bath is a matter of history ; but no scandal was ever attached to that friendship. Sir Joshua Reynolds's portrait shows Pulteney at sixty-five to be a placid, well-preserved man—one who had not spent either his youth or his middle age in riotous living. He has neither the roving, crafty eye, nor the coarse lips, with their suggestive sensual chuckle, of his powerful rival Walpole. It is easy to see he was no match in cunning, in unscrupulousness, in dogged persistency for the favourite minister of Queen Caroline. No man was better abused in his day than Pulteney, yet his enemies were not able to bring any charge against him beyond that of meanness. Certainly he was not loose in his morals, and his name has never been associated with any of the social scandals of which there were more than enough in the first half of the eighteenth century.

Pulteney had the misfortune to be "almost damn'd in a fair wife." Mrs. Pulteney was very beautiful, but cursed with an abominable temper. It does not speak much for the chivalry of the age when the lady's infirmity was singled out as an excuse for attacking the husband. Lord Hervey's sombre pen draws a vivid picture of Pulteney, whom he hated : "He (Pulteney) had as much lively wit as ever man was master of, and was, before politics soured his temper and engrossed his thoughts, the most agreeable and coveted companion of his time. . . . He had strong passions, was seldom sincere but when they ruled him . . . naturally not generous, and made less so by the influence of

a wife whose person he loved but whose understanding and conduct neither had nor deserved his good opinion, and whose temper both he and every other body abhorred—a weak woman with all the faults of a bad man; of low birth, a lower mind, and the lowest manners, without any one good, agreeable, or amiable quality but beauty.” Farther on he delivers a malicious backhanded blow at the lady.

“Lord Chesterfield and Mr. George Berkeley, with whom he lived in seeming intimacy, he mutually hated. . . . They had both made love to his wife, and though I firmly believe both unsuccessfully, yet many were of a contrary opinion; for her folly, her vanity, her coquetry had given her husband the same jealousy and the world the same suspicion as if she had gone all those lengths in private which her public conduct, without one being very credulous, would naturally have led one to believe.”

Sir Charles Hanbury Williams was no less spiteful, and with less cause, for Pulteney fiercely assailed Hervey, and the latter was only retaliating in kind. The quarrel of Pulteney with Hervey was most unfortunate for the former, as it lost him the King's favour, which he never regained. Their difference arose out of a misunderstanding, and ended in a duel. Pulteney attributed to Hervey an anonymous pamphlet entitled “Sedition and Defamation Displayed,” fiercely attacking him and Bolingbroke. Without ascertaining who was the real author—Hervey, it seems, did not write the pamphlet—Pulteney retorted in bludgeon-like terms with “A Proper Reply to a Late Scurrilous

Libel," also published anonymously. The author dealt blows all round: the Court, Walpole, and especially Hervey, coming in for a share of abuse. Hervey was called "Lord Fanny," the nickname by which he was known from his painted face and effeminate appearance generally. He was described as "half man and half woman," and his physical infirmities were offensively alluded to. In fact, this pamphlet supplied the groundwork of Pope's savage onslaught on Lord Hervey, beginning—

Let Sporus tremble—What! that thing of silk?
 Sporus, that mere curd of ass's milk?
 Satire or sense, alas! can Sporus feel?
 Who breaks a butterfly upon a wheel?

An angry interchange of letters between Hervey and Pulteney followed, in the course of which Pulteney wrote that "whether or no he was the author of the 'Reply,' he was ready to justify and stand by the truth of every word of it at what time and wherever Lord Hervey pleased." The only possible answer to this was a challenge. "Accordingly," to quote the account of Mr. Pelham, who was an eye-witness, "on Monday last, between three and four in the afternoon, they met in Upper St. James's Park, behind Arlington Street, with their two seconds, who were Mr. Fox and Sir J. Rushout. The two combatants were each of them slightly wounded; but Mr. Pulteney had once so much the advantage of Lord Hervey that he would have infallibly run my lord through the body, if his foot had not slipped, and then the seconds took the occasion to part them. Upon which Mr. Pulteney embraced Lord Hervey, and expressed a great deal

of concern at the occasion of their quarrel, promising at the same time that he would never personally attack him again, either with his mouth or his pen. Lord Hervey made him a bow without giving him any sort of an answer, and, to use a common expression, thus they parted."

The accidental meeting between Pulteney and Elizabeth does not suggest romance. The sportsman was hardly a Prince Charming. He was courtly, and he had a pleasant voice, but he was not young, and the heavy aspect of his face did not indicate the gay Lothario. At the same time the elderly gentleman—he was then sixty—could not fail to be charmed. Elizabeth's provoking beauty, the combined brilliancy and delicacy of her complexion, her sparkling eyes and her natural wit must have made her particularly attractive to the cultured statesman, and maybe it was not the young lady's fault that the great Mr. Pulteney did not make love to her. But the statesman was either too cold or too prudent. Instead of amorous trifling, he, as one biographer puts it, "endeavoured to cultivate her understanding. To him Miss Chudleigh read, and with him, when separated by distance, she literally [*sic*] corresponded. Some improvement she gained by this advantage, but the extreme vivacity of her nature prevented any considerable acquirements. Her maxim on every subject was, according to her own expression, to be 'short, clear, and surprising.' A voluminous author was consequently her aversion, and a prolific story, however interesting, disgusted her merely from the circumstance of prolixity. With such a pupil Mr. Pulteney could laugh, and, in despair

of his literary instruction making any deep impression on the mind of his adopted fair one, he changed the scheme and endeavoured to initiate her in the science of economy instead of books."

William Pulteney was, as we have seen, like John Gilpin, of a frugal mind. According to the observant biographer who has shed so interesting a side-light on Elizabeth's taste in fiction, "The value of a penny he had studied to a nicety ; one of his practical theories was that a man with the price of a pot of porter in his pocket should purchase only a pint." Neither the subject of thrift nor its practical application could have appealed to Elizabeth. The saving of a penny, we may be certain, was as distasteful to her as a prolix story, and it is to be feared that the tutor got little more than sly, furtive yawns and pretty pouts for his pains. In point of fact, the good and economical Pulteney must have bored the sprightly Miss Chudleigh, and the chances are that she only endured him because of his influence with the Prince and Princess of Wales, and one can imagine how Elizabeth must have coaxed and wheedled her elderly admirer until he had promised to speak to the Princess Augusta, and obtain that for which her soul longed—the place of a maid of honour.

While in Devonshire Elizabeth's reputation for beauty and loveliness spread as far as Plymouth, and it came about that she attracted the attention of Joshua Reynolds, the young painter, who was already beginning to make his name. Reynolds was born at Plympton, a few miles from Plymouth, and, according to Mr. W. Cotton, painted Miss Chudleigh's portrait in 1743.

Miss Chudleigh "was then on a visit to Saltram, and her father, Colonel Chudleigh, resided at Hall, in the parish of Cornford, about eight miles from Plymouth." Mr. Cotton's words are rather confusing. Colonel Chudleigh's residence at Hall is nowhere else mentioned, and if it had not been established beyond the possibility of a doubt that Colonel Chudleigh died at Chelsea years before, one might almost infer that he was alive and in Devonshire at the time of Elizabeth's visit to Saltram. It is certain, however, that Miss Chudleigh sat to Reynolds, and a charming picture the young artist produced. Whether Reynolds was struck by her beauty, and asked her to sit to him, or that the portrait was a "commission," paid for possibly by Pulteney, it is quite impossible to say. Most likely Elizabeth's piquant face attracted the artist, and, had his diary extended back to 1743, no doubt we should have had the enthusiastic entry to which a recent writer on Georgian Century Celebrities makes reference. Unfortunately, so far as can be gleaned from the pages of Cotton, Reynolds did not commence his diary until 1750. One can hardly credit the penurious Pulteney with making presents to anybody, but it is reasonable to assume that Reynolds's portrait had much to do with the fair sitter's favourable reception by the Princess Augusta, to whom Pulteney, who was then a *persona grata* at Prince Frederick's Court, introduced the young lady, soon after the painting of her picture.

From this point very little is heard of Mr. Pulteney, so far as the Chudleighs were concerned. Perhaps he was dropped by Elizabeth after he had proved of no

further use, or it may be Mr. Pulteney saw that his character was likely to suffer by too close association with the lively maid of honour. What passed for innocent attentions in Devonshire might have a very different interpretation in gay and giddy London. In all probability, however, the cause of Mr. Pulteney's disappearance from Elizabeth's world was that politics once more engrossed his attention. The year that the Chudleighs returned to London was a time of great excitement in Parliament. An open and personal attack had been made upon Walpole, who had become exceedingly unpopular on account of the heavy taxation, the waste of money in fruitless naval expeditions, the audacity of the Spanish privateers (they captured our merchant-ships with impunity), the suspension of commerce, and last, but not least, the terrors of the press-gang. A motion, bringing serious charges against the minister, was introduced, and Pulteney was one of its warmest supporters.

It was during this debate that Sir Robert misquoted Horace. "As I am not conscious of my crime," said he, "I do not doubt of being able to make a proper defence. 'Nil conscire sibi nulli pallescere culpæ.'" He was corrected by Mr. Pulteney, who observed that "the right honourable gentleman's logic and Latin were equally inaccurate," and declared that Horace had written "nulla pallescere culpa." Walpole defended his quotation, and offered to wager a guinea on its correctness. Pulteney accepted the challenge, and referred the decision to the minister's friend, Nicholas Hardinge, clerk of the House, a man distinguished for classical erudition. Hardinge decided against Walpole ;

the guinea was immediately thrown to Pulteney, who caught it, and, holding it up, exclaimed : " It is the only money I have received from the Treasury for many years, and it shall be the last."

Pulteney spoke the truth. Walpole's adherents, by persistent speaking, wore down the Opposition on the night of the debate, and, sixty of the latter withdrawing tired out, the motion was rejected by a considerable majority. Subsequently Walpole was compelled to resign, and a Whig Ministry, with Pulteney at its head, was formed, but he never had an opportunity of again crossing swords with his astute rival. Walpole retained his power and influence with the King and Queen, and, resolving to remove his opponent from his path, prepared a trap for Pulteney, into which the latter unsuspectingly walked. Pulteney was tempted with the offer of an earldom, Walpole knowing full well that his adversary, once in the House of Lords, would be disarmed. The ambitious politician became the Earl of Bath, but at the last moment he saw through the manœuvre, and, according to Horace Walpole, " was so enraged at his own oversight that, when he went to take the oaths in the House of Lords, he dashed his patent on the floor and vowed he would never take it up—but he had kissed the King's hand for it, and it was too late to recede."

Pulteney never recovered from the effects of this false move. The public regarded his elevation as a sacrifice of their interests to his own personal gain. The new peer was conscious of this, and after he became Earl of Bath he rarely spoke and practically took no active part in politics. His enemies mean-

while took advantage of his new position to renew their old attacks, Sir Charles Hanbury Williams was again active with his versified wit, and the following may be taken as a sample of the kind of thing the earl had to endure :

To the earl said the countess, what makes you so dull ?

E. Because for your ladyship I've played the fool.

C. For me, do you say, sir ?—your lordship, I mean——

E. Ay, curse that damn'd title, 'tis that gives me spleen.

C. You have no sense of honour, no notion of glory——

E. Yours are Polly Walpole should not rank before ye.

For mine, honour'd we had been happier still

Had you been plain Madam and I been plain Will.

Polly Walpole was, as we have seen, Sir Robert's natural daughter by Molly Skerret, whom Walpole married on his wife's death. The circumstances of her birth made no difference to Polly's recognition by her father's friends, but the Countess of Bath naturally was not of the number. Elsewhere Hanbury Williams says that Pulteney, in becoming Lord Bath—

Trucked the fairest fame

For a right honourable name

To call his *vixen* by.

No terms were too bitter to apply to the Countess of Bath. Sir Charles politely calls her "Bath's ennobled Doxy," alludes to her stinginess and corruption, but allows that her personal beauty was universally admitted.

When the Earl of Bath died, in 1784, it was written of him, "This was the great William Pulteney, who, like other patriots without principle, degenerated into a peer without honour, and died without the vestige of

regard for his memory being found in any breast that existed at the time of his departure."

Severe enough, but not without justification, for hardly a single measure for the public good is connected with his name. It is remarkable that Pulteney's chief claim for notice should be his introduction to the Princess of Wales of Elizabeth Chudleigh—the starting-point of her adventurous career.

CHAPTER III

**Elizabeth Chudleigh at the Court of Frederick, Prince of Wales—
Frederick's follies and intrigues—The rival Courts—The "Beautiful Vanelle"—A feminine assault on the House of Lords—Elizabeth and the Duke of Hamilton—Their secret engagement—1726-43.**

WHEN Elizabeth Chudleigh was appointed maid of honour to the Princess of Wales, Leicester House, where the Prince and Princess held court in royal state, was a hot-bed of amatory as well as political intrigue. Prince Frederick hated the King and Queen as deeply as they hated him. The Prince never lost an opportunity of annoying his father and mother, and it is possible that his open immoralities were as much due to his intense desire to anger them as to his own temperament.

There is this to be said in extenuation of the Prince's follies, that he only followed in the footsteps of his father and grandfather, and if he went further than they did it was due to an entire absence of control when a lad, for which they were responsible, and to the influence of the loose morals of a German Court, over which he was called upon to preside when only in his 'teens. It is doubtful whether he ever gave his mind to anything save affairs of gallantry, and in such matters his taste was by no means refined.

A characteristic adventure in which Prince Frederick figured soon after his arrival in England, which resulted in the loss of his watch, has not failed to find its place in the private papers of the day. "Thursday morning," writes Peter Wentworth, "as the King and Queen were going to their chaise through the garden, I told them the Prince had got his watch again. Our farrier's man had found it at the end of the Mall with the two seals to it. The Queen laughed and said: 'I told you before 'twas you who stole it, and now 'tis very plain that you got it from the woman who took it from the Prince, and you gave it to the farrier's man to say he had found it, to get the reward (twenty guineas, which was offered by advertisement with a promise of secrecy).'" "Really his losing his watch, and its being brought back in the manner it has been, is very mysterious, and a knotty point to be unravelled at Court, for the Prince protests he was not out of his coach in the park on the Sunday night it was lost. But by accident I think I can give some account of this affair, though it is not my business to say a word of it at Court, not even to the Queen, who desired me to tell her all I knew of it, with a promise that she would not tell the Prince. (And I desire also the story may never go out of Wentworth Castle again.) My man, John Cooper, saw the Prince that night let into the park through St. James's Mews alone, and the next morning a grenadier told him the Prince was robbed last night of his watch and twenty-two guineas, and a gold medal by a woman who had run away from him. The Prince bid the grenadier run after her and take the watch from her, which, with the seals, were the only things he

valued ; the money she was welcome to, he said, and he ordered him, when he had got the watch, to let the woman go. But the grenadier could not find her, so I suppose in her haste she dropped it (the watch) at the end of the Mall, or laid it down there, for fear of being discovered (identified) by the watch and seals, if they should be advertised."

Before and after his marriage Frederick was always being mixed up in scandals of a more or less compromising kind. The maids of honour were not averse to looking kindly on princes. One of the ladies of the Queen's Court was the beautiful Miss Vane, daughter of Lord Barnard. Miss Vane had hosts of admirers, and Lord Harrington and Lord Hervey, were rivals for her favours. Indeed, it was slyly said of her that, though a maid of honour, she was "willing to cease to be one on the first opportunity." The witticism was destined to be justified. When Prince Frederick had been in England a year Miss Vane became a mother. The child was born in her apartments in St. James's Palace, baptized in the Chapel Royal, and bore the name of Fitz Frederick Vane, and, whatever may have been the wishes of the young lady, the Prince made no secret of the affair.

Queen Caroline was very indulgent to her husband's follies, as she had political reasons for shutting her eyes to his infidelities, but she would have none of her son's. Perhaps had she been kindly disposed towards Frederick she might have overlooked what in those times of easy morals was but a peccadillo, but she detested the Prince and told him, in her blunt way, to take his intrigues elsewhere. It was certainly unfortunate that Miss

Vane's slip was the second scandal of the kind. Queen Caroline had not forgotten Miss Howe (another maid of honour) who in the merry days of Hampton Court had had a similar mishap. Miss Vane had to go, she lost caste, her family turned their backs upon her, and, what was worse, the Prince found a new flame in Lady Archibald Hamilton, a mature lady of thirty-five, and the mother of ten children. Here there was, in addition, an incumbrance in the shape of a husband, but Lord Hamilton was old and complaisant and did not count. He placidly accepted the situation, as did also the ten children.

It is said that Lady Archibald had few if any attractions, and gossips marvelled why the Prince should turn from a handsome woman to one who had neither youth nor beauty; but Frederick was vain, silly, and not unused to sodden with drink what brains he had, and Lady Archibald Hamilton, shrewd and level-headed, pandered to his weaknesses. Her ascendancy never left him. Lord Hervey, in his caustic fashion, wrote: "He saw her often at her own house, when he seemed as welcome to the master as the mistress; he met her often at her sister's, walked with her day after day for hours together *tête-à-tête* in the morning in St. James's Park, and whenever she was at the drawing-room (which was pretty frequently) his behaviour was so remarkable that his nose and her ear were inseparable."

Never was there such a pretty piece of scandal as that caused by the abandonment of Miss Vane. The wits set their brains to work, and the town was showered with piquant skits. Among these produc-

tions were "Vanilla in the Straw," a lampoon in rhyme from which it is impossible to quote, and "The Fair Concubine, or the Secret History of the Beautiful Vanilla," a story "Dedicated to Five Honourable Maids," dull enough to read now, but no doubt considered highly humorous at the time it was written. It contains a portrait of the lady, who is supposed to be fondly gazing at the Prince's picture. Underneath are the lines :

As the old Patriarch we in Scripture find
Of taming sheep by Art the Breed confined,
And made his Lambkins o' the mottled kind,
So Big Vanilla, with a serious air,
Views every feature with attentive Care
To give her coming Boy his Father's Princely Stare.

The object of the story, pretty plainly indicated, was to throw doubts on the paternity of the child. The authors of "Vanilla, or the Amours of the Great, an Opera as it is acted by a Private Company near St. James's," and of "Vanilla, a Tragedy," had the same end in view. No doubt it was all vastly diverting, but it was also vastly scurrilous. Pulteney and Lord Hervey, however, took the lady's part, and the affair ended by the Prince settling upon her £1,600 a year for life, and giving her the house he took for her on her dismissal from the Court.

Lady Archibald Hamilton, *intrigant* as she was, never released her hold of Frederick, and when Elizabeth Chudleigh came to Leicester House, some years afterwards, she found her ladyship practically reigning supreme. The Princess Augusta, amiable, easy-going, and with no will of her own, was in the background,



LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU

and her husband, Prince Frederick, had his love-affairs, got drunk, and committed a thousand follies without let or hindrance.

Women practically governed the Leicester House Court as women governed the Court of the King. There probably has never been a time in the history of England when feminine influence was so great. Unfortunately it was the weakest side of women's character which was in the ascendant. Queen Elizabeth ruled, but she ruled like a man. The woman of the eighteenth century ruled by intrigue, by hatred, by jealousy, by malice. Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, was an able woman, but she could not help being spiteful.

The natural result of the constant exhibition of feminine weaknesses was that men lost respect for women. Hence such attacks as Pope's on Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.

The abuse showered on the Countess of Bath by Hanbury Williams, and the lampooning of poor Miss Vane show that the question of sex did not enter into the matter when there was a desire to wound. So it comes about that Elizabeth Chudleigh has suffered considerably from her biographers, all of whom seem anxious to rake up everything that could be said against her. It is unfortunate that the greater part of the materials which exist concerning her should have been gathered by her enemies and detractors.

But even in these days women were not wanting in courage and ability to defend themselves on occasion. A humorous instance of this is told by Lady Mary

Wortley Montagu, who gives, with much zest and freedom, a description of an attack made by certain noble ladies on the House of Lords. The incident happened just previous to Elizabeth Chudleigh's appointment, and in a way anticipated recent parliamentary history.

"At the last warm debate in the House of Lords," she writes, "it was unanimously resolved there should be no crowd of unnecessary auditors; consequently the fair sex were excluded and the gallery destined to the sole use of the House of Commons. Notwithstanding which determination, a tribe of dames resolved to show on this occasion that neither man nor laws could resist them. These heroines were Lady Huntingdon, the Duchess of Queensberry, the Duchess of Ancaster, Lady Westmorland, Lady Cobham, Lady Charlotte Edwin, Lady Archibald Hamilton and her daughter, and others. These ladies presented themselves at the door at nine o'clock in the morning, where Sir William Saunderson respectfully informed them the Chancellor had made an order against their admission. The Duchess of Queensberry, as head of the squadron, pished at the ill-breeding of a mere lawyer, and desired him to let them upstairs privately. After some violent reprisals, he swore by G— he would not let them in. Her Grace, with a noble warmth, announced by G— they would come in, in spite of the Chancellor and the whole House.

"This being reported, the peers resolved to starve them out; an order was made that the door should not be opened till they had raised their siege. These

A Feminine Siege of the House of Lords 73

Amazons now showed themselves qualified for the duty even of foot-soldiers; they stood there till five in the afternoon without . . . sustenance, every now and then playing volleys of thumps, knocks, and raps against the door with so much violence that the speeches in the House were scarcely heard. When the Lords were not to be conquered by this, the two duchesses (very well apprised of the use of stratagem in war) commanded a dead silence of half an hour; and the Chancellor, who thought this a certain proof of their absence (the Commons also being very impatient to enter) gave order for the opening of the door, upon which they all rushed in, pushed aside their competitors, and placed themselves in the front rows of the gallery. They stayed there till after eleven, when the House rose, and during the debate gave applause and showed marks of dislike not only by smiles and winks (which have always been allowed in these cases), but by noisy laughs and contempts, which is supposed the true reason why poor Lord Hervey spoke miserably."

What adds to the drollery of the episode is that these spirited ladies had not the slightest interest in the matter under discussion, which was something to do with alleged Spanish aggression. It was a purely Woman's Rights question which forced them into hostilities, and no one was better qualified to lead an attack than her grace of Queensberry. Her portrait in the National Portrait Gallery shows her tall, stately, and imperious, perhaps a little too thin for perfection of form, but of a shape well suited to display to advantage the picturesque dress of the period. The

duchess never hesitated to speak her mind, and this outspokenness earned for her a not undeserved reputation for eccentricity.

The Lady Huntingdon of the party, the "well-meaning fanatic" as she was once termed, subsequently turned her thoughts towards rigid piety, joined the Calvinistic Methodists, appointed the famous George Whitefield her chaplain, and founded the sect known as the Huntingdonians. The Lady Archibald Hamilton was the astute dame who had captured Prince Frederick, and the others were all more or less supporters of the Prince of Wales and opponents of the King and Sir Robert Walpole.

This sudden irruption of the Leicester House party into politics was an exceptional thing, and probably was due to one of the whims of her impetuous grace of Queensberry, who recognised no law but her own will. The maids of honour, it is certain, were far too frivolous to take much interest in Parliament. Dances, cards, music, and frolicsome love-making were more to their taste. The Princess had no fancy for anything but music. She had been a pupil of Handel, and the grand old musician must have been a constant visitor to Leicester House. Elizabeth Chudleigh, who was neither musical nor artistic, doubtless found more amusement in teasing the vain and empty Bubb Dodington and making eyes at the gallants who visited the Court.

Elizabeth's life at the Court was probably very much that so well pictured by Mr. Sydney, the author of "England and the English." We are told that "A fashionable lady in the last century seldom awoke

until nearly noon, and when she did signalised the fact by three violent tugs at the bell, or as many raps with the slipper on the floor, for the black servant to place at her bedside chocolate and cream, of which she would drink two, perhaps three, 'dishes.' Before the cups and saucers had been cleared away the belle's intimate friends and acquaintances (male as well as female) would begin to arrive, and would be ushered into her chamber, where she would exchange salutations with them, devising plans for the day's arrangements and participate in all the trifling matters which go to make up a meeting of this kind. The fourth of Hogarth's series of pictures depicting *Marriage à la Mode* represents the drawing-room levee of a fashionable couple in the first half of the eighteenth century. To the left the bridegroom sits sipping his chocolate, surrounded by his friends and admirers, while the *friseur* is engaged in the task of curling the locks of his spouse, who is listening with rapt attention to the utterances of the councillor who lounges on a sofa by the side of her dressing-table. Within a short time the Sir Fopling Flutterers, the Dapperwits, the Themises, would make way for mercers, mantua-makers, lacemen, milliners, haberdashers, and other ministers to female *parure*, who in their turn had to give place to quite a small army of duns and creditors presenting their bills. As soon as the belle had succeeded in getting rid of these nuisances—'a very difficult task sometimes'—she rose and proceeded to put on all her chains, and, with the assistance of her maid, perhaps managed, by dint of great exertion, to complete her toilette by about

three o'clock. While Betty was engaged dressing her hair, 'my lady' fondled her lap-dog or prattled to her parrot, her monkey, or squirrel. She then went down to dinner and wearied her guests, if any happened to be present, with worn-out jokes and phrases battered, stale, and trite. The second important point in the programme was paying a visit, in company with her lap-dog and monkey, either to some of the many toy-shops or the auction-rooms where articles of vertu, cockle-shells, looking-glasses, dogs, snuffers, wigs, masks, spectacles, and fancy china, for which beaux and belles had a perfect mania, and Oriental knick-knacks of all descriptions, were bought and sold. A poet of the time speaks of fashionable dames as taking—

" Their wonted range
Through India's shops to Trotteux's on the 'Change,
Where the tall jar erects its stately pride
With antic shops in China's azure dyed ;
There careless lies a rich brocade unroll'd,
Here shines a cabinet with burnished gold.

DODSLEY, 'The Toy-shop,' 1735.

" The India shops, which corresponded to the bazaar of modern days, were the principal repositories in the capital, of curiosities, of furniture, and costly wearing apparel, and were so named by reason of the predominance of articles of exclusively Indian manufacture. The next step was to hire a chair and frequent the playhouse or the opera, and, when tired of this, to return home to tea at six. It was fashionable for ladies to take tea with one another by turns in the evening, and it was tacitly understood that tea would be followed by games of cards. One after another the ladies would

make their appearance, and over 'the cups that cheer but not inebriate' discussed every conceivable subject, from religion to coquetry. Tea over, card-playing began, and continued, with the exception of a short interval for supper, till the voice of the drowsy watchman, bawling the morning hours, roused them to don their hoods and cloak, and to wend their steps in the direction of their respective abodes. If the weather proved so unfavourable that a belle was compelled to stop at home, she racked her brains to kill the time, and, if she failed in this, had recourse to the bottle."

The dress usually worn by ladies in the reign of George II. (again to quote Mr. Sydney) seems to have been a gown heavily brocaded, the waist reduced to a point, a huge hoop, embroidered shoes with high heels, pointed at the toes. The sleeves of the gown were wide, a ruffled cuff hung from the elbows, and hanging sleeves depended from the backs of the gowns worn by young ladies. The neck and shoulders were usually covered with a fine handkerchief, woven either of French lawn and cambric, which was most extravagantly worn until 1747, when Parliament stepped in and enacted that all persons who wore cambric or lawn on any garment or apparel after the 24th day of June 1748 should forfeit to the informer the sum of five pounds.

But the lady of fashion had something more to occupy her time than her visits to her dressmaker and milliner. Deportment was of vital importance if she desired to make a figure in Hyde Park, Ranelagh, or Vauxhall. Every little act of etiquette had to be per-

formed according to the rigid laws laid down by custom. The fashionable beauty had to be instructed by her dancing-master, whose lessons were indispensable. Walking, for instance, would seem to be a simple thing, but according to Mr. F. Nivelon, an authority of the time, it was an art not to be acquired without considerable practice. Mr. Nivelon has some very instructive hints for the benefit of his pupils in his "Rudiments of Genteel Behaviour." They are told that "the Head must be erect and free to move, the Body also upright, disengaged and easy, the Arms to the point of the Elbow likewise falling gracefully, and the Hands across, as described in this Figure ; the Steps must be in proportion to the Height, the Leg that moves foremost must come to the Ground with a straight Knee and the Body will insensibly move to that and leave the other Leg light and free to pass forward in like Manner, at which time, looking with decent Humility and a submissive Air, the Courtsie in passing by may be properly made by joining the backward foot to that which is foremost and sinking and rising gradually, then walk as before. It is necessary to observe that it will be impracticable to Dance, or perform any genteel action or Exercise, without attaining this Method of walking ; which this Figure proves to be right, for though from the waist to the feet, the Limbs are not discovered, yet the Foot advanced standing firm and turn'd outwards, proves that knee to be straight, whereas if the Foot was otherwise, the Knee would be so too, and it is impossible without being straight on the advanced Knee to Walk well, easy, or graceful." Fashionable life, it is evident, in

the middle of the eighteenth century was in some respects a very serious affair.

It may be doubted whether Elizabeth's early admirer, Pulteney, after his elevation to the peerage, visited the Prince and Princess of Wales, but it is certain his successful rival, Sir Robert Walpole, notwithstanding his staunch support of Queen Caroline, was a frequenter of the Leicester House circle. Doubtless he found the free and easy manners of Frederick's Court much more to his taste than the dreariness of St. James's Palace. A story is told of the Lady Augusta, the eldest of the Prince's family, then a girl of six, mistaking Sir Robert Rich for Sir Robert Walpole, and asking him what had become of his blue string and his fat belly. "Sir Blue String" was Walpole's cant name in the pasquinades of the time, and his abdominal protuberance was as invariable a point in the lampoons of that generation as Lord Brougham's check trousers, the sprig between Lord Palmerston's lips, Mr. Gladstone's collars, and Mr. Chamberlain's eye-glass became in later times.

Amid such surroundings, and associated with a dissolute Prince, who had no respect for himself and little for others, it is wonderful how Elizabeth escaped calumny in regard to her conduct and behaviour at the Court at this period. The Prince must have found her very fresh and attractive, but he was probably too empty-headed to appreciate her wit, and, what is more likely, he was under the strict subjection of the keen-eyed Lady Archie. Her ladyship was not the one to permit a rival near *her* throne. At the same time she

did not neglect precautions, and she found an ally in her handsome and dashing nephew, the Duke of Hamilton. The young duke, just turned nineteen, came to Leicester House, saw Elizabeth Chudleigh, and succumbed at once to the charms of her bright eyes, her red lips, her lovely complexion, her dimples, her merry laughter and lively sallies.

The Duke of Hamilton was not the only relative Lady Archibald introduced to the Court. Her ladyship had in fact, on her appointment as Mistress of the Bed-chamber, found as many places as she could for her kinsmen and kinswomen, and her extreme solicitude on behalf of her relations was notorious. The brother of Lord Chesterfield indulged his wit one day at the Court and gave great offence by addressing every couple he met as "Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton" —the joke costing him his dismissal.

When Lady Archibald Hamilton saw that her nephew had really fallen in love with Elizabeth and Elizabeth with him, and that their passion was something more than a mere flirtation, she was greatly relieved so far as the Prince was concerned. She was some years older than when she wrested him from the superior attractions of Anne Vane, and there was some danger of Frederick's fickle fancy roving in directions other than her own. Fred, as she knew full well, was an absolute fool. His mother, Queen Caroline, once said to Lord Hervey: "The Prince is such an ass that one cannot tell what he thinks." "He is, madam," returned Hervey, "a mere bank of sand, and anybody may write on him." Sir Robert Walpole, after his coarse, savage fashion, termed the

Prince "a poor weak, irresolute, false, lying, dishonest, contemptible wretch, that nobody loves, that nobody believes, that nobody will trust, and that will trust everybody by turns, and that everybody by turns will impose upon, betray, mislead, and plunder."

Lady Archie may have been of the same opinion as Walpole—she certainly was in a position to judge—but it is doubtful whether she ever realised the Prince's leaning towards ugly women. Herself ugly, she was blind to this side of Frederick's character. The time came when Lady Archie had a successor in Lady Middlesex, small in person and yellow as a guinea; but it was not Frederick who was faithless, but Lady Archibald Hamilton herself, who transferred her affections to William Pitt.

Though the growing affection of the Duke of Hamilton for Elizabeth was suspected by her ladyship, the latter was far too shrewd to take any notice. So long as the young nobleman's passion monopolised the attention of the dangerous Miss Chudleigh, her ladyship was in no danger of Elizabeth displacing her in the favour of the Prince. Nor was she at all alarmed at the possibility of a marriage between her nephew and the attractive maid of honour. She probably thought the duke, who was on the eve of making the grand tour, was not likely to entangle himself in any serious love-affair. But her ladyship was mistaken, for the young couple plighted their troth, at the same time swearing each other to secrecy. The duke promised, on his return to England, to marry the lady of his heart and Elizabeth vowed to be true to

her lover. After many sighs, kisses, and fond endearments his grace departed, possibly to make fresh conquests—he was too adventurous ever to lose a chance of winning a lady's heart—but certainly with a resolve to have no other woman but Elizabeth Chudleigh for his wife.

CHAPTER IV

Court retailers of gossip—Elizabeth visits her aunt at Lainston, Hampshire—Mrs. Hanmer's treachery—The Hon. Augustus Hervey—A sailor's wooing—Elizabeth's uncertainty; she finally accepts Lieut. Hervey—The midnight marriage—Precautions to ensure secrecy—Her husband's hasty departure—A secret and a puzzle—1743-4.

WHETHER there was any real love on the part of Elizabeth for the young duke it is impossible to say. Although Miss Chudleigh was not at all inclined to sentiment, there is no reason why her heart should not have been touched. His grace of Hamilton, one can well imagine, was an impetuous wooer, likely to take her fancy, despite the characteristic level-headedness which never deserted her even in the most trying situations. She could hardly hope to look higher than a duke for a husband, and it is not doing her an injustice if one conjectures that she would have accepted his grace of Hamilton, love or no love. Small blame to her. She was no different from the rest of her sex who in those days found their highest aim in angling for rich husbands. The beautiful sisters Gunning (one of whom afterwards married this very Duke of Hamilton) were little better than adventuresses. Many of the titled dames were worse, and many nonen-

tities in other respects. Elizabeth was anything but a nonentity. Her daring forced her into the glare of the footlights, and when she was in an equivocal position she was not afraid to face it. The many scribblers who have written about her, and who would have been too glad to take up any scandal, have nothing to say against her reputation during her first year at the Court of Prince Frederick. It must not be forgotten that there were many chroniclers of scandal at the Court; Bubb Dodington for instance, an apothecary's son by birth and a man of fashion by accident—an uncle leaving him an estate and a fortune. It was Bubb Dodington's ambition to be considered a man of letters—an ambition which his literary efforts scarcely justified. Horace Walpole, with his gift for crystallising character, said of him that he was always aiming at wit and never finding it, and the sarcasm fairly measures Dodington's mental capacity.

Bubb Dodington, like Walpole himself, was an inveterate gatherer of stories, the more piquant the better, but as a *raconteur* was infinitely inferior to the gay philosopher of Strawberry Hill. Such specimens of wit as have been preserved are not remarkable for brilliancy. The best is said to be his remark to Lord Cobham, in whose company, with that of others, he fell asleep after dinner. When Dodington awoke, he denied having had a nap and offered, as a proof, to repeat all that Lord Cobham had been saying. The noble lord challenged him, and Dodington went on to repeat a story which his lordship admitted he had been relating. "And yet," said Dodington laughingly, "I did not hear a word of it. I went to sleep

because I knew that about this time of day you would tell me this story."

Bubb Dodington owed his place in the Court circle to his wealth and to his complacency in enduring Frederick's ideas of fun. Walpole says: "He submitted to the Prince's childish horseplay, being once rolled up in a blanket and trundled downstairs." As to the use of his purse, Frederick once said to his secretary, with a chuckle at his own sharpness: "That man [Bubb Dodington] is reckoned one of the most sensible men in England, yet, with all his parts, I have just knicked him out of five thousand pounds." It probably never occurred to the sapient Prince that the "man of parts" permitted himself to be "knicked."

Bubb Dodington, also like Horace Walpole, kept a diary, of which only the driest and most uninteresting portions have been preserved, the editor having thought fit to expunge the entertaining and pungent entries. From his intimacy with Frederick and his position at the Court, it is pretty certain Bubb Dodington knew all the gossip, and the gossip would lose nothing in detail from his fashion of retailing it. For this reason Elizabeth, perhaps, saw the necessity of being circumspect. She did not want any rumours of frivolity on her part to reach her ducal lover, and very shortly after his departure she accepted the invitation of her aunt, Mrs. Hanmer, to stay for a time at Lainston, in Hampshire, where the lady was living in the house of a Mr. Merrill, also a relative of the Chudleighs.

Mrs. Hanmer was very anxious to do the best she could to get a husband for her niece, and set to

work at the earliest opportunity. She had no idea Elizabeth had solemnly engaged herself to the Duke of Hamilton, and when letters came from abroad to Elizabeth, Mrs. Hanmer had not the slightest scruple in opening them. The good lady very likely thought it was highly improbable the duke would ever marry her niece, and deemed it no sin to suppress his letters.

Her lover's seeming neglect was naturally resented by the high-spirited girl, and when, one July day, she met a young naval officer at Winchester Races she did not discourage his advances. The young naval officer was the Hon. Augustus Hervey, son of Lord Hervey, the "Lord Fanny" of Pope, and the chronicler of the court days of the two first Georges. Augustus fell in love with Elizabeth at first sight.

Though not long out of his 'teens Hervey was already a lieutenant ; but in the Royal Navy of those days age and experience went for nothing ; the drawing of one's pay and a share in any prize-money that might be going were the only things that mattered. Hervey himself, when captain, got Harry Angelo, the six-year-old son of the founder of the famous fencing family, rated on his books as a midshipman, and, after distinguishing himself in his ship, the *Dragon*, under the guns of Moro Castle, Captain Hervey presented the boy's mother with twenty-five guineas as her son's share of the prize-money.

There was, it is clear, nothing to tempt the girl to tie herself to a suitor who had so little to offer her in the way of worldly possessions. One may readily con-



jecture, however, that the opportunity of a little "frizelation"—the delightful word coined by the mother of the Hon. Augustus in her merry maiden days at Hampton Court when she was known as the "beauteous Molly Lepel"—was too strong for the lively Elizabeth to resist. Wounded love and vanity would no doubt play their part in bringing about a desire for reprisals, while the honest admiration of a sailor lad younger than herself could not have been otherwise than pleasing to a mature damsel of twenty-four. It may be taken for granted that Elizabeth did not receive the young lieutenant's advances coldly.

Whatever may have been Lieutenant Hervey's pay at the time he fell under the fascinations of the sprightly Devonshire girl it was certainly not enough to marry upon. Probably his father made him an allowance which a rash marriage would have placed in jeopardy, and the lad had every reason to keep such an imprudence a profound secret. Lieutenant Hervey's prospects of becoming the head of the noble family to which he belonged were exceedingly remote, for his father, John Lord Hervey, was the second son of the Earl of Bristol; his uncle Carr, in direct succession, was alive, and Augustus himself was Lord John's youngest son. The lad, therefore, had as much cause to refrain from matrimony as Elizabeth herself, and possibly his passion might not have culminated in a marriage but for Elizabeth's aunt.

In spite of the epithet "cunning" applied to Mrs. Hanmer by one of Elizabeth's biographers, there is little reason to think the lady did not conscientiously believe that in suppressing the Duke of Hamilton's

letters she was acting "for the girl's good." Already the young duke had established a reputation for adventurous gallantry, and who was to say that he would prove constant to the maid of honour to whom he had plighted his troth? The young bloods of the early Georges thought nothing of "loving" and "riding away," and why should his grace of Hamilton be any different from the rest? On the other hand, an eligible husband, if not a wealthy one, had presented himself in the person of the Hon. Augustus Hervey, whose father, at all events, was a personage of might and influence, and the sagacious Mrs. Hanmer, mindful of the proverb that a bird in hand is worth two in the bush, furthered the young officer's suit in every way possible.

So she was delighted when Lieutenant Hervey invited the ladies over his ship, the *Cornwall*, part of the fleet then lying at Portsmouth under the command of Sir John Davers. It may be taken for granted that Hervey was very proud to beau the pretty Elizabeth about the vessel and do the honours in hearty sailor fashion, and it was very natural that, in return for his hospitality, he should be asked to Mr. Merrill's house.

The young lieutenant probably believed in the wooing that was not long a-doing. Sailors have wives in every port, and, if he chose to cast paternal displeasure aside, marriage to the lad was but a small matter. War was going on, the fleet at Portsmouth was to set sail in a few days for the West Indies, and the chances were a cannon-ball from the enemy might intervene, and he would never see the beautiful Elizabeth again. Hervey may also have thought

there was no other way of obtaining the young lady save with the sanction of holy Church. The fleet had sailing orders, and he had no time for a long and sustained siege, and in his ardour he was not likely to notice that Elizabeth was not particularly demonstrative in her affection. Mrs. Hanmer was adroit and indefatigable in working in his interest, while Mr. Merrill, who was taken into confidence, if he did not approve the marriage, lent his assistance, and finally Elizabeth, pestered on all sides, gave her consent, as most girls similarly placed would have done.

At the same time it is difficult to understand why the shrewd and business-like Elizabeth made the mistake of throwing over the Duke of Hamilton for a penniless lieutenant. Elizabeth Chudleigh was not only ambitious, but she had a very keen appreciation of the value of money. Her marriage with the Hon. Augustus was the maddest thing possible. If it became known she would, of course, be compelled to resign her post as maid of honour, and secrecy was equally desirable on her husband's part. Only passionate love and the glamour of romance could justify the foolish step. Lieutenant Hervey's passion was hot and genuine enough, but in Elizabeth's case there was no passion at all. She had nothing to gain by the marriage with the young sailor, but everything to lose. The whole business was foreign to the young lady's disposition and ideas. Yet she consented, and one can only conjecture why. Possibly Elizabeth herself did not know, and the best explanation, remembering that she was a creature of moods, is that her compliance was a whim of the moment.

The age of Miss Chudleigh at this time is a point that adds to the difficulty of solving the puzzle. Mr. Baring Gould remarks that "there is little doubt Elizabeth was not more than seventeen when she became maid of honour." If this were so, the year of her birth would have to be fixed at 1726 instead of 1720, the year given by all her biographers, there being no dispute that it was in 1743 when she was introduced by Pulteney to the Princess Augusta, Mr. Baring Gould does not give any proof of the birth in 1726—no proof, indeed, exists of her birth in any particular year—and he probably rests his opinion on the statement of the Attorney-General in the bigamy trial in 1776, who put the age of Elizabeth at the time she was married as seventeen or eighteen.

A writer in the *British Magazine and Review* accepted the authority of the Attorney-General. Six years after the trial, he wrote: "The Duchess of Kingston's person was esteemed beautiful, though she is rather lower than even the common size; and scrutinising observers have discovered that her form is by no means exact; she has, however, unquestionably a fine complexion, good features, and penetrating eyes. But as she is now in her fifty-seventh year, her charm must have been some time on the wane."

The statement of the Attorney-General was most likely based on Elizabeth's own estimate, and would make the Duchess of Kingston, as she claimed to be, fifty, whereas, if born in 1720, she would at the time of the trial have reached her fifty-sixth year. The period of the fatal fifty is one dreaded by most women,

especially by those who pose as beauties. The astute duchess saw the value of enlisting the sympathy of her judges, and in every way it was necessary she should make herself out as young as possible. Too much reliance, therefore, need not be placed on her word. There was also another reason why the lady should pose as younger than she really was. This reason had much to do with the "jactitation" proceedings she instituted in 1768 in order to annul the marriage with Augustus Hervey, and will be dealt with in its proper place.

On this matter of age the evidence of Horace Walpole is difficult to gainsay. Writing to Sir Horace Mann in 1776, he says: "They (the prosecution) favoured her age as much as her person on the trial, for they made her out fifty, whereas she must be fifty-five or fifty-six. She and her brother were my playfellows when we lived at Chelsea, and her father was Deputy-Governor of the Hospital. I am fifty-nine almost, and boys and girls do not play together unless near of an age, much less before one of them is born. I believe you remember them at Chelsea as well as I."

Accepting Horace Walpole's memory as correct, Elizabeth would be twenty-four at the time of her marriage, and this fact makes her conduct still more extraordinary. A young woman of twenty-four is very different from a sentimental girl of seventeen, if indeed Elizabeth was ever sentimental, a possibility one may beg leave to doubt. One of her numerous biographers puts the matter thus: "Mrs. Hanmer being in the confidence of her niece, received Elizabeth's complaints of the neglect of her lover. This was what the cunning

aunt expected. Her next step was to excite the girl to jealousy, rouse her pride, and bring forth every accusation against the absent lover that invention could suggest. On the other side, Lieutenant Hervey was continually in view. His assiduities were unremitting, his complaints tender, and his professions burned with all the warmth of a sincere passion. Maddened by the apparent neglect of the duke—teased by the tender solicitation of Hervey, and incessant applications in his favour from Mrs. Hanmer, Elizabeth's dislike to the young officer was overcome, and she consented to become his wife, but only on condition that the marriage should be kept a profound secret." There is something reasonable in this view, and maybe it provides the true explanation. Elizabeth was, for the moment, distracted by what looked like neglect, and took the rash step which, within a few hours, she would have given worlds to recall.

Lainston in those days was admirably suitable for a private marriage. It was a small parish of the value of £15 a year, and, apart from the vicarage, contained only one house—Mr. Merrill's—and at the bottom of the garden was the church. Nothing could be better. Mrs. Hanmer arranged matters with the vicar, Mr. Amis. What reason she gave the clergyman for the secret marriage of her niece does not appear, but clearly she was equal to the occasion. It was settled that Mr. Amis was to expect the marriage party at eleven o'clock on the night of August 4th, and was to go to the church alone, not even the clerk being present.

Mr. Merrill's household consisted of Mrs. Han-

mer's maid, Anne Cradock, a butler, two housemaids, laundry-maid, and kitchen-maid. With the exception of Anne Cradock, all were to be kept in the dark—no easy matter when one remembers the natural curiosity of domestic servants, and their tendency to pry into things which do not concern them. To throw dust in the eyes of this dangerous little army, Mr. Merrill and Mrs. Hanmer dined out, the arrangement being that they should go to the church after leaving their friend's home. Besides Anne Cradock, the only person who was let into the secret was a Mr. Mountenay, a friend of Mr. Merrill, staying in the house.

A little before eleven Lieutenant Hervey and Elizabeth went out, ostensibly to walk in the garden, and were shortly afterwards followed by Anne Cradock and Mr. Mountenay. In the meantime Mr. Merrill and Mrs. Hanmer had gone to the church, where Mr. Amis was awaiting them. Presently four figures emerged from the darkness and entered the porch. The affair had quite a Wemmickian flavour about it. One can well imagine Augustus saying to Elizabeth, in the course of their stroll, "Hallo! here's a church. Let's have a wedding." Mr. Mountenay had brought with him a taper. This he lighted, and, with the clergyman, preceded the party to the chancel. Had any of the inhabitants been strolling near the church at the time, and seen the feeble flickering light passing window after window, there would have been a ghostly story the next day, for the delight of the village gossips.

One can picture the scene. The bride, proud, scornful—the bridegroom ardent, excited, in his ignor-

ance attributing the coldness of the lady to maiden coyness. Mr. Merrill, it may be assumed, was passive ; Mrs. Hanmer was rejoicing in the success of her manœuvres ; and the helpful Mountenay, having stuck the taper in his hat, was possibly too much occupied in holding his improvised candlestick so that the vicar could get all the light possible to read the service by, to take much interest in the service. Close to Mrs. Hanmer, and standing deferentially a little behind her mistress, was Anne Cradock, destined some thirty years after to prove a veritable thorn in the side of the bride, who was now listening listlessly to the monotonous voice of the clergyman, and tying herself for life to a husband for whom she did not care, much less love.

The service was over. There was no adjournment to the vestry, no signing of any register—for a very good reason ; Mr. Amis did not possess one. Owing to the fact that his parish contained but one house, besides his own residence, his duties were nominal. He had not taken the trouble to provide a register.

Nothing remained except to return, but, to be on the safe side, Anne Cradock was despatched to see that the coast was clear so far as the other servants were concerned, and, the girl reporting accordingly, back crept husband and wife to Mr. Merrill's house, entering by the rear of the premises as if they had sauntered in from the garden, while the rest of the party, to make it appear they had just come from their friends, walked in at the front door.

Two days of married life, and Lieutenant Hervey tore himself away to join his ship, ordered with the rest

of the fleet to the West Indies. If one reason said to have been given by Elizabeth for her aversion to Augustus Hervey be correct, her two days of marriage could hardly have been days of happiness, nor could the parting, on her side at all events, have been altogether sorrowful. One may hope that Elizabeth's ground for hating her husband had its origin in the brain of some ill-natured biographer. The assertion ascribed to her involved a charge against Augustus Hervey which, if true, quite justified her in the line she took. If, on the other hand, it were not true, yet, making it all the same for reasons of her own, the invention of so vile a thing would put her in a very odious light. There is nothing in the conduct of Elizabeth to show she had the depraved mind which could prompt such an invention, and she may well have the benefit of the doubt.

Anne Cradock's evidence given at the famous trial thirty years afterwards does not bear out the insinuations flung at Elizabeth. To the observant maid-servant the newly married couple seemed loving and affectionate. In answer to questions from the Solicitor-General, Anne said :

"I saw them particularly in bed the last night Mr. Hervey was there, for he was to set out in the morning at five o'clock ; I was to call him at that hour, which I did, and, entering the chamber, I found them both fast asleep ; they were very sorry to take leave."

"Can you fix what year this was ?"

"I believe it to be in the year 1744, but I am certain it was the same year in which the *Victory* was at Portsmouth."

"Do you recollect what time of the year it was?"

"In the month of August, I think."

"What is your reason for thinking it was in the month of August?"

"My reason is that it was in the time of Maunhill Fair, and also that there were greengages ripe, which the lady and gentleman were both very fond of."

"Do you recollect how long it was after the death of Mr. Merrill's mother?"

"No, I cannot justly say."

"Where did Captain Hervey go, as you understood, the morning he went away?"

"To Portsmouth."

"Did you understand that he was then in the sea service?"

"I did, and that he was going with Admiral Davers."

"Have you any particular reason for knowing that he did go with Admiral Davers?"

"The reason I have to believe he did go with him is the person whom I married afterwards was Captain Hervey's servant."

"Was he servant to him at that time?"

"He was."

"Did you receive a letter from the person you afterwards married, who was Captain Hervey's servant and attended him?"

"I did, from Port Mahon."

"Do you know what relation Mr. Merrill was to the lady at the bar?"

"First cousin."

"Who was Mr. Mountenay, whom you mentioned as present at the marriage?"

"A friend of Mr. Merrill's, as he pretended."

"Did he live in the family at that time?"

"He was in the family at that time, and had been from the time of the death of his mother."

"Do you know whether any other part of the family, of both parties, were acquainted with the marriage, except those persons you have mentioned?"

"No, I did not at that time."

"Did the lady change her name on the marriage?"

"Never in public, to my knowledge."

This is the story of the secret marriage, as nearly as it can be told, and it leaves the puzzle of the reason of Elizabeth's after-aversion to her husband unsolved. It is quite possible that, at the time of her marriage, she had not that dislike of her husband which she certainly entertained later on, and the probability is that, when she had time to think over what she had done, she was mad that she had been so foolish, and the result was hatred of everybody concerned, and most of all of the man who had married her, and of the relation who had brought the marriage about. From the humble tone of a letter addressed to her some years afterwards by Mrs. Hanmer, it would appear as though Elizabeth had spoken her mind pretty freely to her aunt on the matter.

However, the marriage could not be undone, and notwithstanding that the Church and the law had made her the Hon. Mrs. Augustus Hervey, Elizabeth went back to the free and easy Court of Frederick and Augusta as "Miss Chudleigh," and as "Miss Chud-

leigh" she intended to remain. Not one of her gay companions suspected she was no longer qualified to act as maid of honour. Elizabeth knew how to keep a secret, and for years that secret was well guarded.

It came out long afterwards that she gave her confidence to one person, but as regarded her marriage only. That person was Lord Barrington, and there is not the slightest reason to believe that nobleman ever betrayed the trust reposed in him.

CHAPTER V

The married maid of honour—A two years' silence—Elizabeth's anxiety—The rising of '45—The condemned rebel lords—George Selwyn's morbid mania—Frvolities at Frederick's Court—Augustus Hervey's unexpected return—Elizabeth's refusal to see him—His pursuit of her—A fateful meeting in Conduit Street—A parting of the ways—1744-7.

OF Elizabeth's doings at Leicester House after her return from Lainston, with the romantic secret of her marriage weighing on her heart, there is but little record. She certainly had not then exhibited that boldness and freedom which afterwards made her so notorious, and it is more than likely that, for the time being, she was not in the mood for Court frivolities. Perhaps, too, she dreaded her husband committing some act of indiscretion which would bring to light her rash and unlucky marriage. Discovery meant the loss of her income and the shattering of her future prospects. Had the marriage become known to the Princess Augusta, Elizabeth must have resigned her post as maid of honour forthwith, and given up the luxury and comfort in which her soul delighted and which had become a necessary condition of her existence. The contemplation of such a possibility can hardly have allowed her to be happy.

Before she parted from the man she had wedded

she exacted from him a promise that he would never seek her as a husband ; but the young lady's experience of the loose, slip-shod Court of Frederick and Augusta must have told her that a man in love with his wife would regard such a bond very lightly. Of course the promise was one which Lieutenant Hervey could readily make, possibly with reservations which he kept to himself, seeing that he knew his cruise in the West Indies would last a considerable time. For two years his wife heard nothing from him, nor did she receive any epistles from the Duke of Hamilton, the lover from whom she was estranged, thanks to the manœuvres of her aunt in intercepting correspondence. Elizabeth probably regarded this love-affair as a memory not to be revived but with sad and vain regrets of what "might have been."

There is not the slightest evidence that Elizabeth's conduct from August 1744 to October 1746 was other than discreet. Scandals were numerous at Leicester House, but not one was attached to the fascinating Miss Chudleigh. This is all the more to her credit as the gallantries of Frederick, Prince of Wales, were as persistent as notorious. But the Prince's tastes were low, and maybe the sharp tongue of his wife's favourite maid of honour kept him at a distance. Mr. Jesse says of Frederick that, "like his father, he seems to have outraged morality rather with the view of being regarded as a man of gallantry and intrigue than from any other cause." In every respect but this even his enemies allow that he was a most exemplary husband, and as a father his conduct appears to have been altogether unexceptional. Probably his royal

highness became wiser after his youthful escapade with the fair Vanella, and in middle age confined his amours to ladies outside his Court.

Though in a way he was popular, Frederick was ridiculed by the public. On one occasion an upholsterer whom he employed having voted at an election in opposition to Frederick's wishes, the offender received a communication, through the medium of one of the Prince's servants, that his master's custom would hereafter be withdrawn from him. "I am going," added the messenger pompously, "to order another person to make his royal highness a chair." "With all my heart," was the reply. "I don't care what they make him so long as they don't make him a throne." The plain-speaking upholsterer doubtless expressed the feelings of the nation.

As a relief to his amatory amusements abroad, the Prince at home practised the 'cello, played duets with Desnoyers, a fiddler and dancing-master (and, in the first years of the Prince's differences with his father, a spy for both sides), and patronised fortune-tellers from Norwood gipsies to the Count St. Germain, the predecessor of the more celebrated Cagliostro. The so-called Count St. Germain was a mystery at the time, and the riddle of his life has never been satisfactorily answered. Always splendidly dressed and sumptuously appointed, with an apparently inexhaustible purse and magnificent jewels in profusion, he spoke all languages, and would talk with negligent familiarity of famous personages of the past, every now and then, as if unconsciously, dropping into the tone of an actor in the scenes he was describing. No wonder he im-

posed on that credulous generation, by whom he was regarded indifferently as the Wandering Jew, the possessor of the Great Elixir of Life, and the discoverer of the Philosopher's Stone.

Walpole's description of him when he was arrested as a Jacobite spy shows what a puzzle he was to the town. "He is an old man," we read, "who goes by the name of Count St. Germain. He has been here these two years, and will not tell who he is and whence, but professes that he does not go by his right name. He sings, plays on the violin wonderfully, composes, is mad, and not very sensible. He is called an Italian, a Spaniard, a Pole, a somebody that married a great fortune in Mexico and ran away with her jewels to Constantinople, a priest, a fiddler, a vast nobleman. The Prince of Wales has had considerable curiosity about him, but in vain. However, nothing has been discovered yet against him. He is released ; and, what convinces me that he is not a gentleman, stays here and talks of his being taken up for a spy."

St. Germain went subsequently to Germany, where he made the acquaintance of Marshal de Belleisle, who brought him to Paris, and in the salons of De Choiseul and De Pompadour, and even in the King's closet at Versailles, he had a stage really worthy of his great talents, for great talents he must have had, remarks the late Mr. Tom Taylor in his "History of Leicester Square," "to have held his own with all, from highest to lowest, and to have got together without visible means his cabinet of precious pictures, his boxes full of the finest precious stones, and the money for his lavish expenditure." The rumour was that



FREDERICK, PRINCE OF WALES



GEORGE II

St. Germain was the son of a Portuguese Jew, and Voltaire was of opinion that his resources came from the enormous sums paid him for his services as a political spy. No proof of the latter assertion, however, has ever been discovered.

Elizabeth, with her secret constantly preying on her mind, found little in the Court at this period to occupy her. She was interested in music, but could not play or sing. She was too strong-minded to believe either in fortune-telling or in the charlatanism of St. Germain, and she was wholly indifferent to the political plots which were continually being hatched at Leicester House, more probably to amuse Frederick and annoy the King than with any serious object ; and on the whole, in spite of Frederick's fooleries, the court life of those two years must have been rather humdrum. Ranelagh Gardens, it is true, could be visited, but the early days of this afterwards famous place of frivolity and pleasure were decidedly decorous and dull. Ranelagh was opened with a public breakfast, and for some time morning concerts, consisting of selections from oratorios, were given. In the evenings there seems to have been but little entertainment. The visitors simply walked about, and were supposed to be satisfied with admiring the Rotunda and the gardens. Elizabeth, with her active brain and thirst for adventure, could have found no attraction in Ranelagh at this period.

Judging by Walpole's flippant allusions, the rising of '45 does not appear to have cast much gloom over the Courts of St. James's and Leicester House, although

the unhappy leaders of the Pretender's party had friends in both. Sadness only came when the rebel lords, Cromarty, Kilmarnock, and Balmerino, were tried for their lives in Westminster Hall, and were sentenced to be beheaded. The Duke of Hamilton, Elizabeth Chudleigh's old love, interceded for Kilmarnock's life, but, remarks Walpole, his intercession rather hurried him to the block. The duke, belonging to the Leicester House coterie, was not likely to greatly influence the King. Still, he might have succeeded but for the Duke of Cumberland, the "Butcher" of Culloden, who, true to his character, would show no mercy. At that time, although in London, the Duke of Hamilton does not seem to have approached Elizabeth, and he probably had not recovered from his chagrin at her apparent faithlessness.

Lord Cromarty, while in the Tower, was only seen by his wife through the gate, her ladyship not choosing to be shut up with him, as she thought she could serve him better by her intercession without. The poor lady exerted herself like a true wife. She waited upon the Princess of Wales at Leicester House, and came leading into the room her four little children, the sight of whom ought to have roused a feeling of sympathy in the royal heart. Gray, alluding to the episode in one of his letters, insinuates that the Princess was not so greatly touched as she should have been. "The Princess saw her, but made no other answer than by bringing in her own children and by placing them by her." It is hardly likely this was the extent of Lady Cromarty's reception. The

Princess Augusta was very kindly natured, but she may well have realised the hopelessness of any efforts to induce the King to be merciful. An application from Leicester House was bound to be received coldly at the Court of St. James.

Cromarty was not of the stuff of which heroes are made. When sentenced he was much dejected, dropped a few tears on being removed to the Tower, and swooned as soon as he was put into his cell. Perhaps he was not regarded as a very dangerous plotter, or the Princess Augusta's intercessions may have proved successful, for he was eventually reprieved. Lord Balmerino Walpole calls "the most natural brave old fellow I ever saw. He displayed the highest intrepidity, even to indifference. At the bar he behaved like a soldier and a man; in the intervals of form with carelessness and humour. He pressed extremely to have his wife, his pretty Peggy, with him in the Tower."

Both Balmerino and Kilmarnock met their fate with undaunted courage. The execution on Tower Hill no doubt was looked upon by the mob as a fine sight. As the stout Balmerino walked from his prison to execution, seeing every window and house-top occupied with spectators, he cried out: "Look, look, how they are all piled up like rotten oranges." Nothing could be too brutal for the taste of the lower orders in the middle of the eighteenth century. At Temple Bar, which was constantly being decorated with the heads of rebels, a good trade was done by persons letting spying-glasses at a halfpenny a look, and after Lord Lovat's execution the great attraction

at the fairs around London was a representation of the scene performed by puppets nearly as large as life. A puppet was made to lay his head on the block, down came the axe, and the loyal spectators cheered loudly. For this show all others were neglected.

The brutality of the mob was, however, quite matched by the callousness of the upper classes, who betted freely on the chances of the rebel lords emerging from their trial with acquittal. Prince Frederick's frolicsome humours were not affected by the tragedy. At a supper-party, when the fun grew fast and furious, he and the maids of honour, with Elizabeth as the ringleader of the ladies, pelted a sugar model of Carlisle Castle, the chief ornament of the table, with sugar-plums, in derision of the aristocracy.

Concerning Lord Lovat's execution Walpole writes: "You have heard that old Lovat's tragedy is over: it has been succeeded by a little farce containing the humours of the Duke of Newcastle and his man Stone. The first event was a squabble between his grace and the sheriff about holding up the head on the scaffold—a custom that has been disused, and which the sheriff would not comply with as he had received no order in writing. Since that the duke has burst ten yards of breeches-strings about the body which was to be sent into Scotland, but it seems it is customary for vast numbers to rise to attend the most trivial burial. The duke, who is always at least as much frightened at doing right as at doing wrong, was three days before he got courage

enough to order the burying in the Tower. I must tell you an excessive good story of George Selwyn : some women were scolding him for going to see the execution, and asked him how he could be such a barbarian to see the head cut off. 'Nay,' says he, 'if that was such a crime I am sure I have made amends, for I went to see it sewed on again.' When he was at the undertaker's, as soon as they had stitched him together, and were going to put the body into the coffin, George, in my Lord Chancellor's voice, said, 'My Lord Lovat, your lordship may rise.' " And this from the George Selwyn who passed for a humorist and a wit ! For callousness and indecency it could hardly be surpassed.

Every effort was made by the Government to suppress the nationality of the Scotch after the rebellion of 1745, even down to their ballads and their kilts. This proved too much for the lampooners, as can be seen in the following skit : " We hear that the dapper wooden Highlanders who so heroically guard the doors of snuff-shops intend to petition to the Legislature in order that they may be excused from complying with the Act of Parliament with respect to the change of dress, alleging that they have ever been faithful subjects to his Majesty, having constantly supplied his guards with a pinch out of their mulls when they marched by ; and, so far from engaging in any rebellion, they have never entertained a rebellious thought : whence they humbly hope that they shall not be put to the expense of buying new clothes."

Later on in the same year (1746) a whimsical side-

light on Frederick's notions of politics is thrown by an antic which, with Elizabeth's assistance, he indulged in on hearing a report that Pitt had been appointed Secretary at War. The Prince hated Pitt, and with good reason, seeing that the statesman was Frederick's rival in the favours of the yellow-faced Lady Middlesex; and the rumour of Pitt's appointment coming one evening when the Court at Leicester House were in high spirits, his royal highness vowed that Miss Chudleigh was fitter for the post. Not contented with proclaiming his opinion, Frederick actually dictated a letter to Lord Harrington, which he made Elizabeth write, to desire he would draw the warrant for her. There were fourteen people at the table, and all were required to sign it. The Duke of Queensberry refused, as being a friend of Pitt, but despite his remonstrances the letter was actually sent. Of course, the prank was regarded as one of the Prince's mad extravagances, and nothing came of it.

To follow Elizabeth's history with anything like an accurate sequence is a puzzling task. As with the date of her birth, so with the dates of other important events—the authorities differ, and contradictions meet one at every turn. According to some of her biographers, two months after the tragedy of the rebel lords a bolt from the blue descended upon the young wife in the shape of a letter from the Hon. Augustus Hervey demanding a private interview, and the effect was to make her more fiercely fixed in her resolution to resist reunion. She refused to meet him, and he waylaid her; but entreaties, threats, and promises had

no avail with the determined beauty. Finally Captain Hervey, as he had now become, quitted his obdurate wife with the menace that she had not seen the last of him.

For a month Elizabeth was tormented by her persistent husband, and at the end of that time, to her great relief, he was ordered to the Mediterranean. To quote her own words, "her misery commenced from the arrival of Captain Hervey in England, and the greatest joy she experienced was the intelligence of his departure." Hence whilst the ship on which he was to sail remained at Spithead or on the Downs she was tremblingly alive with apprehensions that his orders might be countermanded. A fair wind out of the Channel was the soother of her mind, one that was adverse renewed her agitation. However, her husband departed, and was away until the January of the following year, when he renewed his suit, but again without avail.

"For a time Captain Hervey experienced from his wife every mortification that disgust and hatred could produce. He was received with frowns and melancholy gloom—his appearance distressed, his departure elevated her spirits. Yet notwithstanding this unhappiness which so frequently obtruded upon her private hours, in public," it is recorded, "she was the attractive centre of the fashionable circle—her vivacity and beauty rather increased than diminished after her marriage; neither sigh nor tear betrayed uneasiness of mind, and a crowd of titled and untitled beaux constantly formed her train."

It is not difficult to find a reason for this apparent

contradiction. The wife possibly saw that, in the long run, the husband would be the victor, and if so her reign at the Court might come to an end. The natural outcome of such thoughts was to induce a recklessness which fully accounted for Elizabeth's levity, while keeping at a distance the man to whom she was legally bound.

"Her husband, from motives it is impossible to determine," writes one biographer—who professed to have compiled his memoir from "authentic information and original documents"—"either affected to feel or really felt uneasiness at her conduct and the attention paid by her admirers." But surely his motives were not in any way puzzling. His wife's coldness towards himself and her warmth towards men who were seeking her love must have goaded him to madness. He was torn now by jealousy, now by resentment, and he determined to assert those rights of a husband from which his wife had taken every possible means of excluding him.

Elizabeth in vain attempted to divert her husband's resolution to see her. She wanted to negotiate by letter—he refused to listen to anything save at a private interview, and to her letters he replied with one, couched in vigorous language, threatening her that if she did not comply an immediate exposure of their union should be the consequence, and to this threat Elizabeth saw she had no answer but complete surrender.

She was then living in Conduit Street, Hanover Square, which in the middle of the eighteenth century

looked upon open country. The street took its name from the conduit which stood in the centre of Conduit Mead—a large field, which was the site of the future New Bond Street, and from which, looking towards the north-west, the Tyburn Gallows in the Oxford Road could be plainly seen. Hanover Square, built in 1720, was at first a fashionable residence, but owing to the gruesome exhibition at Tyburn coming betwixt “the wind and their nobility,” the aristocratic tenants departed, and the Square, as well as the adjacent Conduit, George, and Maddox Streets came into low repute. One topographer whose caustic criticisms concerning eighteenth-century “improvements,” make very entertaining reading to-day, remarks: “As to Hanover Square, I do not know what to make of it. It is neither open nor enclosed. Every convenience is railed out, and every nuisance railed in. Carriages have a narrow, ill-paved street to turn round in and the middle has the air of a cowyard, where blackguards assemble in the winter to play at hustlecap up to the ankles in dirt.”

The confusion surrounding our heroine as regards precise information is not confined to dates. It is impossible to decide whether she had the entire house in Conduit Street or only lodgings, and it is equally hard to say if she lived there alone or with her mother. If Mrs. Chudleigh “ran” the house for her “paying guests,” as some have assumed, it can hardly be supposed she did not know of her daughter’s marriage. When Captain Hervey called to see his wife Mrs. Chudleigh would not have been a mother if she had not been curious about Elizabeth’s gentleman visitor.

All things considered, it is probable that Elizabeth lived in lodgings—at that time quite a fashionable practice.

However this may be it is certain her husband called at Conduit Street and insisted upon seeing her. She yielded to his pertinacity, but directly she entered the room she would have given worlds to retreat. Hervey's face flushed, a fierce light leaped to his eyes when he saw the woman, then at the zenith of her charms, and who was his wife by right and by law. That she did not love him was nothing at such a moment. He strode towards her. Alarmed at his appearance, and fearing bodily harm, Elizabeth turned towards the door. In an instant Hervey had bounded across the room and she was locked in ! The situation became still more terrifying, but the lady, who was no coward, put a bold face on the matter and with that warmth of language which was always at her command expostulated with her husband on his extraordinary conduct. What was the meaning of it ?

The question was answered by a laugh. Captain Hervey assured his wife that he intended her no harm, rather the reverse. But Elizabeth was not to be cajoled, and the result was a stormy discussion, a tempest of reproaches, recrimination, and threats.

How reconciliation was effected is a point upon which we cannot offer an opinion. Whether Mrs. Hervey capitulated or her lord and master followed the example of Simon Fraser, Lord Lovat, under somewhat similar circumstances, fifty years before, are matters upon which it would be idle to speculate. The

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lady was always very reticent on the subject and the only allusion she ever made to the embarrassing situation was to call it "an assignation with a vengeance"—a cryptic utterance which may or may not find its interpretation in an interesting event which took place some months afterwards, when the Hon. Mrs. Hervey became a mother.

CHAPTER VI

Elizabeth's embarrassment—She takes apartments in Chelsea—Alone in her hour of trouble—The birth of a son—She confides in Mrs. Hanmer and Anne Cradock—Her mother refuses to visit Chelsea—The death of her child—Elizabeth's distress—She returns to Court—A ridiculous story of Lord Chesterfield and Elizabeth Chudleigh—Elizabeth at Bath—1747-8

SIDE by side with the version of Miss Chudleigh's embarrassments at this trying time, as recorded by her various biographers, it is interesting to place the statement of the Attorney-General made at the trial thirty years later. "Miss Chudleigh," said the learned counsel, "went back, as had been agreed, to her station of maid of honour in the family of the Princess Dowager. Mr. Hervey sailed in November following for the West Indies; and remained there till August 1746, when he set sail for England. In the month of October following he landed at Dover, and resorted to his wife, who then lived by the name of Miss Chudleigh in Conduit Street. She received him as her husband, and entertained him accordingly, as far as consistent with their plan of keeping the marriage secret. In the latter end of November in the same year Mr. Hervey sailed for the Mediterranean, and returned in the month of January 1747, and stayed

there till May in the same year. Meanwhile she continued to reside in Conduit Street, and he to visit her as usual, till some differences arose between them, which terminated in a downright quarrel ; after which they never saw each other more. He continued abroad till December 1747 when he returned ; but no intercourse, which can be traced, passed between them afterwards."

If the statement of the Attorney-General is correct we must believe that Captain Hervey was abroad when his child was born, and that throughout the anxious months preceding this event the expectant mother had to act for herself. It is very obvious that if ever Elizabeth needed wit and adroitness in avoiding indirect inquiries and fencing with direct ones, it was during this embarrassing period previous to her temporary retirement to Chelsea "for the benefit of her health." She was still "Miss Chudleigh" to the Court and the world, and the difficulty of retaining her claims to maidenhood must have taxed her ingenuity sorely. The secret of her marriage to Augustus Hervey was easy to keep, as her husband, for reasons already explained, was as concerned as she in maintaining it, but the consequences of that midnight marriage presented far greater difficulties.

What part her husband played in seeing her through those difficulties is very uncertain. In all probability he did nothing, and maybe he knew nothing. He had quarrelled with his wife, he never sought to see her, and it may be assumed therefore that the expectant mother was left to battle alone through her troubles. Naturally she would pretend ill-health, and what place better for

recuperating could she have found than Chelsea, not merely because it was her native air but because it was easy to make out to her inquisitive Court companions that she had friends in the pleasant riverside resort? Chelsea, as a health-restoring place, was looked upon by Londoners in the eighteenth century much as their posterity regard Brighton in the twentieth.

We are not told what part of Chelsea Mrs. Hervey selected as her quarters during her enforced banishment. The child—a boy—duly came into the world and was christened at Chelsea Church on November 2nd, 1747, as “Henry Augustus, son of the Hon. Augustus Hervey.” Mr. Cæsar Hawkins, a famous surgeon of that day, was a friend of the Chudleighs, and he attended the lady at her confinement and was called as a witness at the famous trial, but so many years had elapsed between the two events that his memory had become vague. All he could say was that the child was born at Chelsea, near to Chelsea College, but that he had forgotten the name of the street. He was told that both the marriage, and the birth of the child, were kept a secret, and he believed the child died a little time afterwards.

A question of interest arises as to how far the self-reliant young woman trusted in others during this trying period. She would naturally seek the aid of those who knew her secret, and of the three women who were present at the marriage ceremony, two were available—her aunt, Mrs. Hanmer, and the maid-servant, Anne Cradock. It chanced that both were in London at the time. There is no evidence that she sought the assistance of Cradock; indeed the evidence is to the

contrary ; but with her aunt it was a different matter. Mrs. Hanmer was really responsible for the mistake of the marriage, and the young wife had a right to call upon her relative to see her through her trouble. Whatever faults Mrs. Hanmer had, she could hold her tongue, and of her good faith her niece could be perfectly sure. It is therefore a fair assumption that Mrs. Hanmer knew about the expected arrival and was at hand in case of need. Anne's examination by the Solicitor-General in reference to what happened in Chelsea supports this supposition, and is worth giving *in extenso*. It runs thus :

"Had you occasion after this [*i.e.* the marriage at Lainston] to see the lady in London ?"

"I saw the lady in London many times."

"Do you know whether there were any children of the marriage ?"

"I believe one."

"What reason have you for believing so ?"

"The lady herself told me so, and her aunt also, whom I ought to have mentioned first. The lady told me that she would take me to see the child."

"Did she offer to carry her aunt as well as you to see the child ?"

"I do not know that."

"Did the prisoner at the bar say anything particular to you about the child ?"

"She told me the child was a boy, and like Captain Hervey."

"How long did you continue in the service of Mrs. Hanmer ?"

"Till she died."

"When did Mrs. Hanmer die?"

"She has been dead eleven years the second of last December."

"Had you any occasion to know what became of the child, whether it lived or died?"

"I know nothing further than what the lady said. When I expected to go and see it, the lady came in great grief, and told me it was dead."

"Have you any reason to know in what place the child was born?"

"At Chelsea, by reason her mother could not go there."

"Who informed you that the child was born at Chelsea?"

"Mrs. Hanmer told me this."

"Have you ever heard it from the prisoner?"

"Yes, certainly I have."

"She said her mother could not go there. What do you understand to be the reason why Mrs. Chudleigh could not go to Chelsea?"

"By reason her husband and son were buried there, as I have been told."

It would appear from this that Mrs. Hanmer knew all the circumstances. Mrs. Hanmer was Anne's first informant, and it was not likely that Elizabeth would "offer to carry her aunt" to see the child when she had already seen it, possibly many times. The reason why Mrs. Chudleigh could not visit Chelsea was not on account of her sensitiveness, because "her husband and son were buried there"—she was far too strong-minded for that to influence her—but because her presence where she was so well known might lead to



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awkward questions. It is easy to understand why Elizabeth did not at this juncture want to take her mother into confidence, that is presuming Mrs. Chudleigh was in ignorance that her daughter was married—an ignorance which we take leave to doubt.

Had Elizabeth's boy lived her course of life might have been materially altered. There is reason to believe that she had an affectionate nature, which she had not many opportunities of showing. The little Anne Cradock had to tell concerning the Chelsea episode gives a glimpse of a side of Elizabeth's character of which her biographers were ignorant.

All Elizabeth's acts at this time were fated to bear fruit through the medium of Anne Cradock. At intervals from the beginning to the end of Elizabeth's career, whether as Miss Chudleigh, or the Hon. Mrs. Hervey, or the Countess of Bristol, or the Duchess of Kingston, Anne played the part of the confidante, which even the most secret and firmest-willed woman seems to find necessary. Whatever may have happened afterwards to make Cradock Elizabeth's enemy, there is no doubt that when the child was born the woman was the young lady's friend.

Elizabeth must have thought a good deal of her child. It is clear she was fond of talking about it to Anne, and one day when she was taking the woman for an airing in her coach, the driver went in the direction of Chelsea, and Elizabeth was much affected, and told Cradock her boy was buried there.

This was after her return to Leicester House. One may well imagine how the Court ladies talked about her during her absence, but whatever was said there is

no evidence to show they suspected the real cause. If, however, any questions were asked, Elizabeth might well be trusted to answer them satisfactorily. On the other hand, if Lord Chesterfield really fired off his oft-quoted witticism, Miss Chudleigh's disappearance must have been freely discussed.

According to the gossips, Elizabeth is made to say to Chesterfield : "Do you know, my lord, that the world says I have had twins?" "Does it?" said his lordship. "For my own part, I make it a point of believing only half of what it says."

This story, as applied to Elizabeth, is improbable on the face of it. She was not the woman to give herself away by asking such a foolish question. The fact seems to be that the story was current at the time, and was adapted to any fair sinner whom it chanced to fit. In a little catch-penny book published in 1773, and entitled "Lord Chesterfield's Witticisms," a collection of sorry jests which we make bold to say Lord Chesterfield would have been ashamed to own, is this version of the tale : "It is told of the celebrated Miss A—h [possibly Miss Ashe, a somewhat notorious young lady of the time], who was always considered as a demi-rep, being absent from Court some weeks, the world spoke very freely of her having laid in. Upon her reappearance at St. James's the Earl of Chesterfield paid his compliments to her, and concluded with this severe witticism : 'Indeed, Miss, the voice of scandal avers that you have been brought to bed of twins, but I never believe half what the world says.'" One is justified in thinking that Lord Chesterfield never exercised his wit, severe or otherwise, in the

manner suggested, and that the application of the story to Elizabeth Chudleigh is pure invention.

There is not the slightest doubt Miss Chudleigh, or, rather, let us say, having regard to the circumstances, the Hon. Mrs. Hervey, managed the affair with great tact and discretion, for from a passage in one of Mrs. Montagu's letters we learn that at the end of December the young mother was staying at Bath. Nor did she show that she had been through the ordeal of motherhood. Mrs. Montagu's words are : "We have here Miss Chudleigh and a very pretty daughter of the Chief Justice [Willes], and they are ill-provided with beaux, so that it is scarcely worth their while to be so handsome." The exact date of the birth of Elizabeth's child is not known, but it was christened on November 2nd, and we take it that a very short time elapsed between the two events, as, of course, it would be Elizabeth's policy to hurry on the inconvenient business. Mrs. Montagu's playful reference makes it certain that within two months the fascinating lady was ready for her old amusement of breaking hearts. Mrs. Montagu, at all events, had no doubt that she was still "in maiden meditation, fancy free," and had any questionable stories reached the ears of the decorous "Blue-stockings" the latter would hardly have written in so complimentary a strain. We may take it that, whatever scandalous stories were current in the London centres of fashion, some of them floated to Bath, one of the headquarters of gossip, and that if any of these stories had related to Elizabeth, they would scarcely have failed of ready circulation.

However this may be, Elizabeth resumed her duties

at the Court, and was now fairly reconciled to her position. Her husband, for a time at all events, ceased to trouble her, and the time passed pleasantly enough until the Duke of Hamilton came upon the scene, and the married maid was again in a terrible dilemma.

The duke may have heard of the indisposition of Miss Chudleigh, and of her retirement to Chelsea, but it is quite certain he was not aware of the cause. This shows pretty plainly that Elizabeth had tided over her difficulties without loss of reputation, or his grace, thanks to some "damned good-natured friend," would have been told of the interesting episode. Elizabeth's visit to Bath and her freedom from anxiety—anxiety which, had it existed, must have told upon her health and spirits—brought back her sprightliness, her charm, and, on the evidence of Mrs. Montagu, her good looks, and it is not wonderful to find the young duke desirous not only to forgive the lady's coldness and silence, but ready to renew his vows.

CHAPTER VII

The Duke of Hamilton renews his devotion and proposes marriage—Elizabeth refuses him and also the Duke of Ancaster—The secret of her marriage and the child well kept—The inaccuracy of biographers—A hypothetical journey to the Continent—At Tunbridge Wells—Practical joking at the Wells—1747-8.

IT is hardly to be supposed that Elizabeth had forgotten her old lover, but that he should seek her after what had happened must have caused her heart to flutter in a fashion to which it had long been a stranger, hardened as it must have been by numberless flirtations. The duke, in spite of the lady's apparent violation of her vows of constancy, returned to his first love eager to forgive and forget, and, whatever views the duke may have had in regard to women in general, there is no reason to suppose his desire to make Elizabeth his wife was other than sincere.

The duke no doubt was free in his conduct and easy in his morals, he drank hard and he gambled deep, but he was not vicious and depraved like the Duke of Wharton, Lord Baltimore, the infamous Colonel Charteris, and others who could be named. He may have been "hot, debauched, and extravagant," defects common enough in those days, but no special scandal attaches to him. He was very proud, and his pride

probably assisted him in maintaining a standard of conduct which, if not very high, was above that of most of his "set." In after-years the Duke of Hamilton was described as "the abstract of Scottish pride; he and the duchess at their own house walk in to dinner before their company, sit together at the upper end of their own table, eat off the same plate, and drink nobody beneath the rank of earl."

It must have caused Elizabeth a bitter pang to be compelled to say no, not merely because she was still in love with the duke, but because she dared not tell him the truth. The mystery of the suppressed letters, no doubt, was cleared up, and the duplicity of Mrs. Hanmer exposed, but at this point explanation ceased. The embarrassed woman could not say she was married, and less still that she had become a mother, and, failing to understand her waywardness, the duke rushed away to console himself in other directions. It is not unlikely his disappointment was the cause of his plunging into deep dissipations, as for some time his wildness was the talk of the town. Walpole never lost an opportunity of saying something malicious in regard to the duke, both previous to and after his marriage, and in 1750, before he met his divinity, the beautiful Miss Gunning, one of two sisters who came over from Ireland and exploited their lovely faces and persons to considerable advantage, the cynic of Strawberry Hill wrote: "In a few years' time we shall have Dukes of York and Lancaster popping out of bagnios and taverns as frequently as Duke Hamilton." After his death, and when Colonel Campbell was about to marry his widow, the lovely duchess, the spiteful scribe made the

caustic comment that the "house of Argyle is content to think that the head of the Hamiltons had purified the blood of Gunning, but I should be afraid that his grace was more likely to corrupt blood than mend it."

The proposal of the duke and Elizabeth's answer were matters sure to leak out, and the refusal of so desirable a husband only stimulated the attentions of other gallants. The Duke of Ancaster tried where Hamilton had failed, but with no better result. The wayward beauty was not to be subdued. Her rejection of such offers amazed everybody, and at no time must the keeping of her secret have been more oppressive and difficult. That she was successful is pretty evident, or she would hardly have been so much sought after. In spite of the easy morals of the day most gallants, however amorous, would have hesitated before asking for the hand in marriage of a lady who had the reputation of having been once indiscreet. If, on the other hand, scandal had really attached itself to Elizabeth, and stories had reached the ears of her suitors, the fact would speak volumes for her irresistible fascination.

However this may be, Elizabeth's steady refusal of wealthy and titled nobles, according to one biographer, "astonished the fashionable world, and the mother of Miss Chudleigh, who was a total stranger to the private marriage of her daughter, reprehended her folly in proper terms." But the author of the "Authentic Detail" does not appear to have studied the official report of the famous trial of the directors of bigamy, or he would not have fallen into the mistake of saying that Mrs. Chudleigh "expostulated" with her daughter on

the folly of refusing the Duke of Hamilton. Anne Cradock's evidence suggests that Mrs. Chudleigh was not ignorant of the secret marriage with Augustus Hervey—indeed, such a thing could hardly have been kept from her, seeing that her own sister or sister-in-law (the exact relationship of Mrs. Hanmer to Mrs. Chudleigh does not quite appear), her cousin Mr. Merrill, the clergyman Mr. Amis, who performed the ceremony, Mr. Mountenay, the useful person who held the candle in his hat while the marriage service was being read, and last but by no means least, Mrs. Hanmer's servant Anne Cradock, shared the story between them. Of course there is the possibility that Mrs. Chudleigh, while knowing, as she certainly did, about the interesting event in Chelsea, might not have been aware that the child was born in wedlock, but when so many persons were in possession of the all-important secret, it is hard to believe that it did not reach the ears of the mother.

The fact that Mrs. Chudleigh, who died in 1756, mentioned Elizabeth in her will by her maiden name goes for nothing. Mrs. Chudleigh, it will be remembered, was a woman of great force of character, and she probably saw no reason why, even in the last act of her life, she should betray her daughter's secret, for in 1756 Miss Elizabeth was still Miss Chudleigh, and no one knew her by any other name.

A much more important misstatement, by the same writer, is his version of what took place after Elizabeth's refusal by the Duke of Hamilton and Ancaster. He says: "At once to be freed, at least for a time, from the embarrassments which environed

her, Miss Chudleigh determined on travel as the means. She embarked for the Continent; chose the circle of Germany as her tour. She resided some time at Berlin, then went to Dresden, and, as she aspired to the acquaintance of crowned heads, she was gratified by the late King of Prussia, who not only conversed with her but corresponded with her. It is not by this meant that there was anything more in his letters than what the politeness of a gentleman dictated to a lady, in spirit and enterprise above the level of her sex. The epistles of Frederick, which consisted of about four lines written in a scarcely legible hand, served Miss Chudleigh to gratify her vanity by talking about. But in the Electress of Saxony she found a friend whose affection for her continued to the latest period of life. The Electress was a woman of sense, honour, virtue, and religion. Her letters were replete with kindness. While her hand distributed presents to Miss Chudleigh out of the treasury of abundance, her heart was interested in her happiness. This she evinced pending the prosecution for bigamy, for at that time a letter from the Electress to the duchess contained the following passage: 'You have long experienced my love; my revenue, my protection, my everything you may command. Come then, my dear life, to an asylum of peace. Quit a country where, if you are bequeathed a cloak, some pretender may start up and ruin you by law to prove it your property. Let me have you at Dresden.' This passage is literally rendered from the French."

Another biographer, who availed himself of most

of the material in the "Authentic Detail" and added much of his own to spice the narrative, puts the matter in much the same fashion, winding up with the spiteful assertion that the "honours" showered upon her "were ever after continual subjects of her boasting vanity." The same biographer goes on to say that "as she found herself so much respected and admired abroad, it is rather extraordinary she ever revisited home, at least during the life of her husband; but she panted for the pleasures of her native land, and, on returning from the Continent, her vanity was flattered by repeated proofs that her charms had suffered no diminution during her absence. She continued the favourite toast of *bon-ton*, the idol of the men, the envy of the women. Her suitors were as numerous as ever—she breathed in an atmosphere of sighs, every butterfly of fashion hovering round her. Lord Howe, who served in the war in America, was the only person whom she did not repel with indifference. He had the reputation of being favoured; nay, more, of having received the last favour from the maid of honour." As this statement came from an anonymous scribbler, whose aim was to produce a book of scandal which would take the town, and who wrote forty years after the alleged visit to Germany, one is justified in regarding the whole story as an invention. Indeed, there are many reasons why it is difficult to believe Elizabeth paid this visit to Germany. Travelling, especially for a woman, in those days of lumbering coaches and hosts of servants, was a very costly affair, and although Elizabeth always had enough money to pay

for her dresses, she could not have defrayed the expense of a continental tour.

As years went by she must have had presents lavished on her by her admirers, or she could not have put by sufficient money to purchase property in the West End of London, as she undoubtedly did later on; and there came a time when the Duke of Kingston's purse was always at her service, but she knew nothing of the duke in 1748. Miss Chudleigh was no doubt extravagant, but she also had fits of economy—maybe the result of the prudent Pulteney's tuition; indeed, in her later years she was open to the charge of meanness, but her savings out of the salary allowed her by the Princess Augusta would have gone but a little way towards the cost of a trip to Germany. Nor is it likely, retaining as she did her post of maid of honour, that she would have been permitted, lax as was the government of the Leicester House Court, to race over Germany as "Miss Chudleigh," making the acquaintance of crowned heads and receiving their favours.

One little fact, however, disposes of the alleged trip to the Continent at this juncture. The Duke of Hamilton proposed marriage in 1748, and in the summer of that year Elizabeth, it is certain, was at Tunbridge Wells. Scrope, writing to George Selwyn, gives a vivid little picture of the high life, habits, and amusements at this fashionable resort. "After drinking," he says, "four bottles, which made me mad and the rest of the company drunk, I strapped and carried Baron Newman, *alias* Crooked-fingered Jack, in a chair quite up to the end of Joy's long

room at nine o'clock, where all the company then in Tunbridge were assembled. I tore open the door and top of the chair, and down he dropped, to all appearance a dead man. Miss Chudleigh, who is subject to fits, . . . fainted and was carried off. This, in less than a quarter of an hour, spread among the ladies like a contagion. I am informed of eight at least who went into fits."

During 1748 Richardson, then approaching the height of his fame (the two first volumes of "Clarissa" appeared in that year), visited Tunbridge Wells in company with Dr. Johnson, David Garrick, and Colley Cibber; and the assemblage of so many distinguished personages was made the occasion of the drawing reproduced on page 213. Miss Chudleigh is represented as walking between Beau Nash and Mr. Pitt.

It is related that while Miss Chudleigh, the free-and-easy Lady Caroline Petersham, afterwards Lady Harrington, and the latter's inseparable friend—one equally free and easy—Miss Ashe, were at Tunbridge Wells they were somewhat incensed by the intrusion into their circle of a Mrs. Wildman, a rich widow of low origin, who wished to pose as a lady of fashion.

Mrs. Wildman's presence was most intolerable, and not to be endured, and a small committee was formed, at the head of which was Elizabeth and her two friends, to invent some method of heaping ridicule upon the lady. It was not long before the combined ingenuity of the lively trio devised something that was appropriate. An invitation was sent to the victim to meet them, and the lady, feeling highly honoured, gladly accepted. Meanwhile the committee

made their preparations, dressed themselves in pursuit of their plan, and received the unsuspecting lady attired in incongruities which struck poor Mrs. Wildman with amazement. The right-hand glove worn by the ladies was of a different colour and material from the left ; of the slippers one was white and the other black, the earrings did not match, and while one cheek was rouged excessively, the other had but a dab of white powder. When Mrs. Wildman saw the odd sight she whispered to a gentleman present, inquiring if the ladies were going to a ball. "No," said he very gravely, being of course in the conspiracy. "Why do you ask?" "Well, they look as if they were dressed for some sort of carnival." "Why, my dear madam," was the reply, "those ladies are in the latest mode. Surely you must know that. Their eccentricities are all the rage."

Mrs. Wildman took careful note of the peculiarities of the latest fashion, and consulted the *modiste* patronised by Miss Chudleigh. The *modiste* of course was in the secret, and devised a most outrageous costume for the poor woman. In due time Lady Caroline invited her to a rout, and when she arrived Mrs. Wildman found the ladies in their ordinary attire, and she was thrown into such terrible confusion that she fainted. The jest, like most practical jokes, must have been more cruel than funny.

The story, like the account of the hypothetical journey given of the writer of the "Authentic Detail," is "from the French" and this is sufficient to throw doubt upon it, for the so-called "Memoirs" published on the Continent contain more fiction than fact. In

the fly-leaf of one of these productions in the British Museum library, is written by one of the early owners of the book, "The duchess's trial for bigamy took place in the year (1776) in which this piece of scandal was published." And scandal it is from beginning to end, with a title-page, intended to stimulate curiosity, worded as follows : "Les Aventures trop amoureuses, ou Elizabeth Chudleigh, ex-duchess douairiere de Kingston, aujourd'hui Comtesse de Bristol, et la Marquise de la Touche, sur la scene du monde. Avec d'autres Anecdotes pour servir d'instructions a ceux qui en ont besoin et d'amusemens aux autres." The Marquise de la Touche was the lady whom Miss Chudleigh later on supplanted in the affections of the Duke of Kingston and the book was written in her ring to Kingston House where Elizabeth in after-years resided, gives a brief history of our heroine, evidently compiled from the biographies above mentioned, but with the addition of a detail which apparently has escaped the other writers, and for which authority is wanting.

Among other writers who have fallen into the error of the earlier biographers as to the whereabouts of Elizabeth in 1748 is Mr. Davies, the author of the "Memorials of Knightsbridge," who, following the lead of the "Authentic Detail," observes : "Unfortunately, instead of allowing time to soothe her sorrows, she began to drown them in a manner which showed a disregard of her sex and position. To escape torments she resolved to travel, but, unwilling to go alone, was indiscreet enough to advertise in the newspapers for a companion. She succeeded, and off they started ; but,

as might have been expected, were soon tired of each other and separated at Berlin. Here she was introduced to the great Frederick, who treated her with much distinction."

We fancy that this assertion must be treated with no greater respect than its predecessors and that it may be accepted that Elizabeth did not seek to find in foreign travel either distraction or an escape from her numerous admirers. The piquant maid of honour was about the last woman in the world to be afraid of persistent lovers—indeed, she went out of her way to attract them, but only so far as to tease and provoke. She never denied herself any opportunity of flirting which presented itself, but in this respect she was no worse than the majority of the Court ladies, and probably a good deal better than some. Daring she certainly was, but this daring never overstepped the bonds of prudence, save on one occasion—the memorable masquerade at Somerset House in 1749, of which more later on, and even this piece of audacity may have had an object other than wantonness.

CHAPTER VIII

Elizabeth's associates—Gay ladies of fashion—The frolicsome Miss Ashe—The friendship and wrangles of Miss Ashe and Lady Caroline Petersham—A merry night at Vauxhall—The Duke of Kingston one of the party—Vauxhall Gardens in the eighteenth Century—1748-9.

AT this time, while Elizabeth was taking her share in whatever might be the fashionable amusement of the hour, where was the captain, the Hon. Augustus Hervey? As the war with France was still proceeding, it is reasonable to suppose he was away on duty. One biographer, writing in 1789, asserts that Miss Chudleigh "ran the career of pleasure, enlivened the Court circles, and each year became more ingratiated with the mistress whom she served. She led fashions, played whist with Lord Chesterfield; visited with Lady Harrington (Lady Caroline Petersham) and Miss Ashe; figured at a masquerade, and laughed at the lover whom she chose not to favour with her smiles, with all the confounding grace of a woman of quality. The reflection put off, however, for the day, too frequently intruded an unwelcome visitor at night. Captain Hervey, the husband, like a perturbed spirit, was eternally crossing the path trodden by his wife. Was she in the rooms at Bath? he was sure to be



AUGUSTA, PRINCESS OF WALES
(From the collection of Mr. A. M. Broadley)

there. At a rout, ridotto, or ball, there was this fell destroyer of peace, embittering every pleasure and blighting the fruit of happiness by the pestilential malignancy of his presence. As a proof of his disposition to annoy, he menaced his wife with an intimation that he would disclose the secret of the marriage to the Princess of Wales."

Despite this apparently authoritative statement, there is no evidence that Captain Hervey did anything of the kind. He and his wife had their final meeting before Elizabeth's enforced retirement at Chelsea, and it was understood that she never wanted to see him again. Captain Hervey by this time must have arrived at a sufficient knowledge of the lady's resolute character to be certain she would keep her word. Moreover, it was obviously to the advantage of both that the secret of their marriage should be kept, and therefore only natural that each should go their own way.

But there were other reasons which made it improbable that Captain Hervey ever pursued his wife for the purpose of annoying her. Hervey was a brave and gallant sailor, always on active service and eager to fight whenever and wherever there was fighting to be done. Evidence exists that he desired to behave with gentlemanly consideration towards the lady whom he had been in such a hurry to marry, and, as will be seen when the matter comes to be dealt with, in the curious legal proceedings taken to annul the unlucky marriage he observed both tact and discretion. But the writers of Miss Chudleigh's biographies had to cater for the taste of the public, and what they did not know

they invented. This is the explanation not only of the fustian in reference to Captain Hervey, but also of the following spiteful passage :

“Her intimacy with Lady Harrington (Lady Caroline Petersham) and Miss Ashe, who rioted in dissipation, gave a stamp to her character. She was constant at the midnight orgies of their pleasures, and no doubt participated in their sensual indulgencies.”

As this was written in 1780, thirty years afterwards, it is purely conjecture. It is certain, however, that Lady Harrington, then Lady Caroline Petersham, and the eldest daughter of the second Duke of Grafton, was one of the most-talked-about beauties of the day. About her intimate friend, Miss Elizabeth Ashe, there is a little mystery. She is stated indirectly by Wraxall and directly by Mrs. Piozzi (who describes her as “a pretty creature, but particularly small in her person”), to have been of very high parentage, her mother being no less a personage than the Princess Amelia Sophia Eleonora, second daughter of George II., and her father the gallant (in more senses than one) Admiral Rodney. The Princess, it is said, displayed the same partiality for Rodney which her cousin and namesake, the Princess Amelia of Prussia, manifested for Baron Trenck. Miss Ashe was as frolicsome as she was adventurous, and her escapades included a Fleet wedding, and an elopement with the scapegrace Edward Wortley Montagu, of which more later on.

Edward Wortley Montagu was the only son of Mary Wortley Montagu, whose eccentricities he

inherited without her genius. After the Mayfair marriage Montagu ran away with his wife to Paris where, in conjunction with Lords Taaffe and Southwell, he was accused of having invited one Abraham Payba, *alias* James Roberto, a Jew, to dine with them at Paris ; and, having plied with him wine till he became intoxicated, to have won from him at play the sum of 800 louis d'or. It was affirmed that they subsequently called at his house, and that, on his exhibiting an evident disinclination to satisfy their demands, they threatened, unless he instantly paid them, to "cut him across the face with their swords." Terrified by their violence and at the same time unwilling to part with his gold, the Jew had finesse enough to give them drafts on a Paris banker, by whom, as he had no dealings with him, he well knew that his bills would be dishonoured ; then, to escape the vengeance of those whom he had outwitted, he quitted Paris. On ascertaining how completely they had been duped, Mr. Montagu, with his associates, Lords Taaffe and Southwell, repaired to the house of the Jew, and, after ransacking his drawers and strong-boxes, are said to have possessed themselves of a very considerable sum of money, in addition to diamonds, jewels, and other valuable articles. The Jew had it now in his power to turn on his persecutors, and accordingly he appealed to the legislature for redress. Lord Southwell contrived to effect his escape, but Lord Taaffe and Mr. Montagu were arrested and were kept in separate dungeons in the Grand Chatelet for nearly three months. The case was subsequently tried in a court of law, and decided in favour of the accused,

the Jew being adjudged to make reparation and defray the costs. From this sentence he appealed to the High Court of la Tournelle at Paris, who revised the sentence. Lord Taaffe and Mr. Montagu afterwards appealed in their turn, but of the result there is no record. In Nichol's "Literary Anecdotes" there is a curious defence by Mr. Montagu of his conduct.

Lady Caroline and Miss Ashe were inseparable, their friendship occasionally interrupted by quarrels, which, however, they soon made up. One may be sure that Lady Caroline was the offender, as she seems to have been blessed (or cursed) with a temper. Epigrams were the fashion in the middle of the eighteenth century, and of Lady Caroline, whose name at the time was coupled with Harry Vane, it was written :

What makes Clodio, who always was fond of new faces,
So notoriously constant to Fulvia's embraces?
Ask Fulvia the cause—she can tell you the true one—
Who makes her old face every morning a new one.

Miss Ashe did not go undistinguished in verse :

Fulvia the tall wears Nana on her arm.
Both vain, both varnish'd, wanton both and warm;
Twin sisters both in everything but this :
Nana leaps up and Fulvia stoops to kiss.

"Nana leaps up" is an allusion to the lady's diminutive stature. Walpole, in his way of fixing an appropriate epithet, speaks of her as "Pollard Ashe." The writer of the following must have had some reason

to be spiteful against Lady Caroline, and does not hesitate to catalogue her defects :

WHO IS THIS?

Her face has beauty, we must all confess,
But beauty on the brink of ugliness.
Her mouth's a rabbit feeding on a rose ;
With eyes—ten times too good for such a nose!
Her blooming cheeks—what paint could ever draw 'em ?
That paint, for which no mortal ever saw 'em.
Air without shape—of royal race divine—
'Tis Emily—oh ! fie !—'tis Caroline.

Lady Caroline Petersham and Miss Ashe were the heroines of Horace Walpole's trip to Vauxhall, of which he gives so inimitable a description.

"I had a card," he writes to George Montagu, "from Lady Caroline Petersham, to go with her to Vauxhall. I went accordingly to her house at half an hour after seven, and found her and the little Ashe, or the Pollard Ashe, as they call her ; they had just finished their last layer of red, and looked as handsome as crimson could make them. On the cabinet stood a pair of Dresden candlesticks, a present from the virgin hands of Sir John Bland ; the branches of each formed a little bower over a cock and hen treading—yes, literally ! We issued into the Mall to assemble our company, which was all the town, if we could get it ; for just so many had been summoned, except Harry Vane, whom we met by *chance*. We mustered the Duke of Kingston, whom Lady Caroline says she has been trying for these seven years ; but alas ! his beauty is at the fall of the leaf—Lord March,

Mr. Whithed, a pretty Miss Beauclere, and a very foolish Miss Spaire. These two damsels were trusted by their mothers, for the first time of their lives, to the matronly conduct of Lady Caroline. As we sailed up the Mall, with all our colours flying, Lord Peter-sham, with his nose and legs twisted to every point of crossness, strode by us on the outside, and repassed again on the return. At the end of the Mall she called to him ; he would not answer ; she gave a familiar spring, and, between laugh and confusion, ran up to him. ‘My lord, my lord ! why, you don’t see us !’ We advanced at a little distance, not a little awkward in expectation how all this would end, for my lord never stirred his hat or took the least notice of anybody. She said, ‘Do you go with us, or are you going anywhere else ?’ ‘I don’t go with you, I am going somewhere else’ ; and away he stalked, as sulky as a ghost that nobody will speak to first. We got into the best order we could, and marched to our barge, with a boat of French horns attending, and little Ashe singing. We paraded some time up the river, and at last debarked at Vauxhall. There, if we had so pleased, we might have had the vivacity of our party increased by a quarrel, for a Mrs. Lloyd, who is supposed to be married to Lord Haddington, seeing the two girls following Lady C. and Miss Ashe, said aloud : ‘Poor girls ! I am sorry to see them in such bad company.’ Miss Spaire, who desired nothing so much as the fun of seeing a duel, a thing which, though she is fifteen, she has never been so lucky to see—took the pains to make Lord March resent this ; but he, who is very lively and

agreeable, laughed her out of this charming frolic with a great deal of humour. Here we picked up Lord Granby, arrived very drunk from Jenny's Whim, where, instead of going to old Strafford's catacombs to make honourable love, he had dined with Lady Fitzroy and left her and eight other women and four other men playing at brag. He would fain have made over his honourable love upon any terms to poor Miss Beauclere, who is very modest, and did not know at all what to do with his whispers or his hands. He then addressed himself to the Spaire, who was very well disposed to receive both ; but, the tide of champagne turned, he hiccupped at the reflection of his marriage, of which he is wondrous sick, and only proposed to the girl to shut themselves up and rail at the world for three weeks. If all the adventures don't conclude, as you expect, in the beginning of a paragraph, you must not wonder, for I am not making a history, but relating one strictly as it happened, and, I think, with full entertainment enough to content you. At last we assembled in our booth, Lady Caroline in the front, with the vizor of her hat erect, and looking gloriously jolly and handsome. She had fetched my brother Orford from the next box, where he was enjoying himself with his Norsa and *petite partie*, to help us mince chickens. We minced seven chickens in a china dish, which Lady C. stewed over a lamp with three pats of butter and a flagon of water, stirring and rattling and laughing, and we every minute expecting to have the dish fly about our ears. She had brought Betty, the fruit-girl, with hampers of strawberries and cherries from Rogers, and made

her wait upon us, and then made her sup by us at a little table."

In *The Gentleman's Magazine*, under August 30th, 1797, there is an obituary notice of Betty, the fruit-girl, which is worth interpellation. It reads: "August 30th, aged sixty-nine, at her house facing St. James's Street, at the top of Park Palace, Miss Elizabeth Neale. She had kept for many years a house in St. James's Street as a fruit-shop, from which she had retired about fourteen years. She had the first pre-eminence in her occupation, and might be justly called the Queen of Applewomen. Her knowledge of families and characters of the last and present age was wonderful. She was a woman of pleasing manners and conversation, and abounding with anecdote and entertainment. Her company was ever sought for by the highest of our men of rank and fortune. She was born in the same street in which she ever lived, and used to say she never slept out of it but twice—on a visit to a friend in the country and at a Windsor installation."

But to resume Walpole's narrative: "The conversation was no less lively than the whole transaction. There was a Mr. O'Brian arrived from Ireland, who would get the Duchess of Manchester from Mr. Hussey, if she was still at liberty. I took up the biggest hautboy in the dish, and said to Lady Car, 'Madam, Miss Ashe desires you will eat this O'Brian strawberry.' She replied immediately, 'I won't, you hussie.' You may imagine the laugh this reply occasioned. After the tempest was a little calmed the Pollard said, 'Now, how anybody would spoil this

story that was to repeat it, and said 'I won't, you jade!'" In short, the whole air of our party was sufficient, as you will easily imagine, to take up the whole attention of the garden, so much so that from eleven o'clock till half an hour after one we had the whole concourse round our booth: at last they came into the little gardens of each booth on the side of ours, till Harry Vane took up a bumper and drank their healths."

The party must have been a particularly uproarious one. Lady Caroline Petersham's joyousness was in no way dashed by the untoward meeting with her lord, nicknamed "Peter Shamble," from his peculiar gait, which Walpole does not fail to note. Lord Granby, in addition to his being drunk, had lost heavily the night before to the Prince of Wales at Kew, and this no doubt had led him to smooth his ruffled temper at Jenny's Whim, a well-known tavern in Chelsea. Lord Granby was afterwards Elizabeth's neighbour at Knightsbridge, and was the Duke of Kingston's friend. He served with distinction in the rising of '45, when he commanded a troop in the regiment raised by the duke, and known as "Kingston's Horse." In the time of Elizabeth's trouble over the bigamy trial she appealed to the Marquis of Granby for assistance, on the ground of his friendship with the duke. The Lord March mentioned became fourth Duke of Queensberry, better known as "Old Q." No doubt, after his fashion, he did his best to add to the gaiety of the evening. The Duke of Kingston of the party had not then begun to cast amorous eyes on Elizabeth, and elsewhere Walpole describes him as being "a very

weak man of the greatest beauty and finest person in England." At the time of the Vauxhall episode he was but thirty-nine, and if this beauty were then "at the fall of the leaf" he must have gone the pace.

A good many descriptions of Vauxhall Gardens exist, but no one has succeeded better in conveying a picture of its attractions than an author who paid a visit there not long after Walpole's merry evening. He writes :

"The garden strikes the eye prodigiously ; it is set with many rows of tall trees, kept in excellent order, among which are placed an incredible number of globe-lamps, by which it is illuminated, and when they are lighted the sound of the music ravishing the ear, added to the great resort of Company so well dressed and walking all about, would almost make one believe he was in the Elysian fields. In the middle of the garden are two semicircles, which appear like an amphitheatre, in which are placed a great number of small booths, which may contain about six or eight people apiece, where they commonly refresh themselves with sweetmeats, wine, tea, coffee, and suchlike. The backs of these boxes or booths are adorned with curious paintings, all of which are enlightened to the front with globes. They are all numbered, and very just attendance is given by a vast number of warders kept for that purpose. Near to this a grand Orchestra, where the music plays in fine weather ; but this night the concert was held in a magnificent hall neatly furnished. At one side of the orchestra is a noble statue of Handel. The music no sooner began than

we entered the hall, where fifty-four musicians performed. Mr. Lowe soon sang, whose character I need not here mention, and after him the inimitable Miss Burchell. . . . Whilst we were entertaining ourselves, we were informed of the new Cascade being lighted. . . . A fine grotto saluted our eyes, surrounded by the statues of Neptune, a mermaid, and other seapieces, a dolphin, etc., placed in very agreeable attitudes, behind which fell in cascades crystal water, which was received by a spacious basin or reservoir, wherein were placed small fishes, etc., which spouted up the water."

Vauxhall parties and "midnight orgies" were not the only dissipations in which the ladies of the Court indulged. Their emotional temperaments demanded constant and fresh excitements, and it may be taken for granted that Elizabeth was not behind in this respect. For a time the troubles of the famous highwayman McLean absorbed the attention of sentimental fair ones, and at his trial the court was crowded with ladies of fashion, among them the inseparables, Lady Caroline Petersham and Miss Ashe, "like Niobe, all tears." No wonder the irrepressible Horace bantered them, and asked if McLean, like his prototype in *The Beggar's Opera*, did not sing :

Thus I stand like the Turk, with his doxies around.

It was a reckless, wanton, mad age, when life was one eternal round of merry-making, and amusement was got out of everything. Was not a procession

to Tyburn and a hanging observed as a general holiday, and did not George Selwyn delight in executions? We have alluded to Selwyn's extraordinary morbidity over the tragedy of Lord Lovat, and another example of his passion for the gruesome is seen in the visit he paid to Paris simply to see Damien broken on the wheel for attempting to assassinate Louis XV. On the day of the execution he mingled with the crowd in a plain undress and bob-wig ; when a French nobleman, observing the deep interest which he took in the scene, and imagining from the plainness of his attire that he must be a person in the humbler ranks of life, chose to imagine that the stranger must infallibly be a hangman. "Eh bien, monsieur," he said, "êtes-vous arrivé pour voir ce spectacle?" "Oui, monsieur." "Vous êtes bourreau?" "Non, non, monsieur ; je n'ai pas cette honneur ; je ne suis qu'un amateur." Sir Nathaniel Wraxall has given a somewhat different version of this story. "Selwyn's nervous irritability," he says, "and anxious curiosity to observe the effect of dissolution of men exposed him to much ridicule, not unaccompanied with censure. He was accused of attending all executions, and sometimes, in order to elude notice, disguised in a female dress. I have been assured that, in 1756, he went over to Paris expressly for the purpose of witnessing the last moments of Damien, who expired under the most acute tortures, for having attempted the life of Louis XV. Being among the crowd, and attempting to approach too near the scaffold, he was at first repulsed by one of the executioners ; but having in-

formed the person that he had made the journey from London solely with a view to be present at the punishment and death of Damien the man immediately caused the people to make way, exclaiming at the same time, "Faites place pour monsieur ; c'est un Anglais, et un amateur."

CHAPTER IX

The peace of Aix-la-Chapelle—Public rejoicing—The Ranelagh Garden masquerade—Miss Chudleigh's daring costume—The Princess and maids of honour scandalised, the King captivated—He commands a special masquerade for Miss Chudleigh—A kiss at the drawing-room "against all precedent"—A questionable story—Mrs. Chudleigh appointed housekeeper at Windsor Castle—The bottle hoax at the Haymarket Theatre—1749.

ON October 16th, 1748, the war between England, her various allies, and France came to an end with the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, but peace was not publicly celebrated until May 3rd of the following year. Walpole writes :

"Last Sunday it was proclaimed : the King had not gone to St. Paul's, but at night the whole town was illuminated. The next day was what was called 'a jubilee-masquerade in the Venetian manner' at Ranelagh ; it had nothing Venetian in it, but was by far the best understood and the prettiest spectacle I ever saw. Nothing in a fairy tale ever surpassed it. One of the proprietors, who is a German and belongs to Court, had got my Lady Yarmouth to persuade the King to order it. It began at three o'clock, and about five people of fashion began to go. When you entered you found the whole garden filled with masks and spread with tents which remained all night *very*

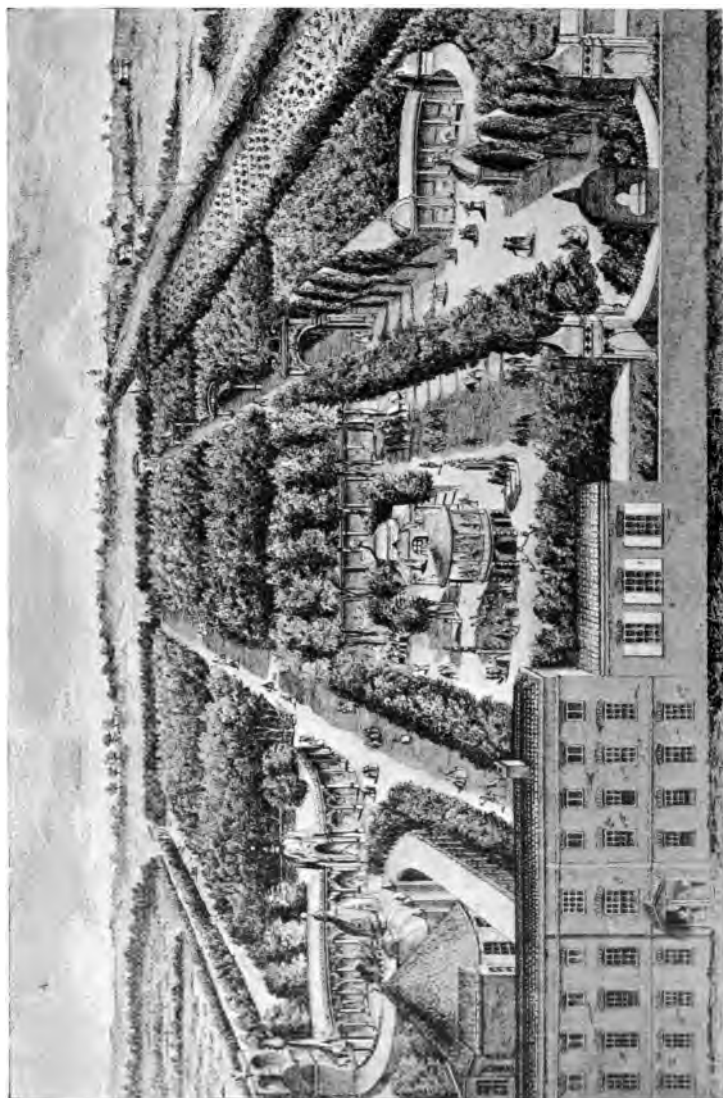
commodely. In one quarter was a Maypole dressed with garlands, and people dancing round it to a tabor and pipe and rustic music, all masked, as were all the various bands of music that were disposed in different parts of the garden, some like huntsmen with French hunters, some like peasants, and a troupe of harlequins and scaramouches in a little open temple on the ground. . . . There were booths for tea and wine, gaming-tables, and dancing, and about two thousand persons. In short, it pleased me more than anything I ever saw."

Walpole thought little of the fireworks, and remarks that "the illumination was mean, and lighted so slowly that scarce anybody had patience to wait the finishing, and then what contributed to the awkwardness of the whole was the right pavilion catching fire, and being burned down in the middle of the show." A curious comment on the manners of the time is Walpole's casual observation that "very little mischief was done, and but two persons killed," while "at Paris there were forty killed and near three hundred wounded by a dispute between the French and Italians in the management, who, quarrelling for precedence in lighting the fires, both lighted at once and blew up the town."

The ill-feeling between the two Courts was marked on this occasion by no place being provided for the Prince and Princess of Wales and their children. The King, the Duke of Cumberland, and Princess Emily saw the sight from the library built by Queen Caroline on ground now occupied by Stafford House, but no invitation was sent to Frederick and Augusta. The

Princess's maids of honour were therefore deprived of special seats where they could see the show, but one may be sure they were looked after by the gallants of both Courts, as the royal enmity did not extend much beyond the chief actors. At any rate, the two opposing forces were friendly enough at the masquerade given on the following Monday at Ranelagh Garden, also in honour of the celebration of peace, and it was on this occasion that Elizabeth distinguished herself in a way that made her for ever remembered. The King was present, and it may be that the young lady designed her costume, or rather her want of it, for his especial benefit.

His Majesty, garbed in an old-fashioned English habit, was especially proud of his disguise, and was greatly delighted when some one, not knowing who he was, asked him to hold their cup as they were drinking tea. The ladies did their best to outshine each other, but not one of them attracted as much attention as our heroine, who went as Iphigenia, "but so naked," says Walpole, "that you would have taken her for Andromeda." We are left in doubt as to the precise form of dress adopted by the audacious lady. The most reliable authority appears to be *The British Magazine and Review*, which, in its issue of August 1782, gives a biography of the Duchess of Kingston, as she had then become, and dealing with the "stories which were industriously propagated by the busy tongue of scandal," says that among them may be reckoned "the tale of the Somerset House (Ranelagh) miscarriage, in which it has been asserted that this lady appeared in a dress so nicely and closely fitted to her



VAUXHALL GARDENS IN 1754

body as to produce a perfect resemblance of the unadorned state of our first beautiful female parent ; and, with this fair representative of frailty as conscious of her condition as Eve after the first act of disobedience, had contrived a similar method of giving evident tokens of modesty in an elegant embroidery of fig-leaves. But these accounts we can positively contradict from the authority of the person of undoubted credit who saw the lady at this entertainment, where she exhibited the figure and dress of Iphigenia, and covered such parts of her skin as a strict conformity to the character she had assumed would have made it necessary to expose with the flesh-coloured silk. Such of our readers as will give themselves the trouble to recollect the dress of Iphigenia will be satisfied that fig-leaves were needless."

Mrs. Montagu, writing on the subject, does not err on the side of refinement. "Miss Chudleigh's dress, or rather undress, was remarkable. She was Iphigenia for the Sacrifice, but so naked that . . . the maids of honour, not of maids the strictest, were so offended they would not speak to her." Perhaps they were envious of Elizabeth's audacity.

The collection of Mr. Broadley contains several contemporary portraits of the audacious maid of honour as Iphigenia. One print tells us to "Note—Next time she goes naked. Miss Ch—dley, in the character of Iphigenia at the *Grand Jubilee Ball after the Venetian manner* in ye Day time ; this dress was invented by this lady and the celebrated Mrs. Cib—r." Another has the additional attraction of verse. The last four lines run thus :

But that is but a spiteful story
 To sully Iphigenia's glory;
 Tho' other nymphs cry Fye upon her,
 She's yet a modest Maid-of-Honour.

Mr. T. Wright, dealing with the fashionable follies which marked this period, says :

"In 1747 the great objects of scandal in the dress of the ladies were hoop-petticoats and French pockets, both of which are represented as being very indecorous." The hoop-petticoat and its inconveniences were made the subject of innumerable caricatures, many of them in the highest degree indelicate. A print entitled *The Review*, without date, but evidently of the latter part of the reign of George II., exhibits the inconvenience of the hoop-petticoat in a variety of ways, and suggests different methods of remedying it. One of the most ingenious is that of coaches with movable roofs, and a frame and pulleys to drop the ladies in from the top, so as to avoid the disarrangement of their hoops, which necessarily attended their entrance by the door. The great outcry at this time was occasioned by the practice of leaving bare too much of the neck and shoulders, and wearing the hoop-petticoats short. A poetical description of the ladies' dress in 1753 directs :

Your neck and your shoulders both naked should be,
 Was it not for Vandyke blown with *chevaux de frise*.

Make your petticoats short, that a hoop eight yards wide
 May decently show how your garters are tied.

A few years later the indignation of the moralist was again excited by the report that ladies were in the

habit of frequenting the masquerades in men's clothing ; and even greater improprieties than this appear to have been at times perpetrated. The satirical *Drury Lane Journal* of April 9th, 1752, contains the following burlesque announcement :

“ ADVERTISEMENT

“Whereas there will be a very splendid appearance at Ranelagh Jubilee, C. Richman takes leave to inform the nobility, and *no others*, that he can furnish them with :

“New-invented masks for those who are ashamed of their own faces, or have no face at all.

“Naked dresses, in imitation of their own skin.

“And all other natural disguises.”

Of course the exploit of our maid of honour is not forgotten, and about her Wright says : “Only the year previously to this announcement, in 1749, one of the Princess of Wales's maids of honour, Elizabeth Chudleigh, afterwards the notorious Duchess of Kingston, had carried the second of these ideas into actual practice by appearing at a masquerade given by the Venetian Ambassador at Somerset House, in the character of Iphigenia, in a close dress of flesh-coloured silk, so as to expose, unembarrassed by the covering of her looser garments, much more than strict delicacy allowed. The Princess gave her a gentle rebuke by throwing her own veil over her ; but the story soon became public, and was tortured into a variety of

shapes, and a number of prints appeared pretending to be portraits of the maid of honour in her 'naked dress,' some of which would make us believe that she had exhibited herself almost in a state of nature.

It will not pass unnoticed that Wright and the author of the article in the *British Magazine*, speak of the masquerade at "Somerset House." The masquerade took place at Ranelagh, and was given not by the Venetian ambassador, but "in the Venetian style."

Of course the caricaturists were soon at work. The incident was far too good to be passed over. In one paper appeared the following advertisement: "A print of the Jubilee Ball or Masquerade at Ranelagh by his Majesty's command after the Venetian manner in the Daytime, April 26th, the Day between the Thanksgiving and the Fireworks for the General Peace with a perspective view of the Rotunda, Tents, Shops and Garden, the Habits which there appeared, particularly the Ladies vying with each other in Dress on that occasion; in which is introduced Miss — in the actual habit she appeared in the character of Iphigenia, the Dress being quite different from any one yet published."

The costume of Elizabeth as she is represented in the rare print of the "Masquerade" in Mr. A. M. Broadley's collection certainly does not bear out the daring suggestion of the picture given on p. 177. The "Masquerade" print was published on May 22, 1749; and the inscription runs, "By His Majesty's command. The Jubilee Ball after the Venetian manner, or Masquerade at Ranelagh Gardens, April 26, 1749."

Whatever was the costume of the daring maid

of honour, it answered its purpose. It is true it shocked the Princess, who hastily whispered to her favourite maid of honour the desirability of more drapery; but it pleased her royal father-in-law, who observed, with a chuckle, to one of his suite that "she left nothing to guess," and, as Walpole puts it: "The King was so pleased with the jubilee masquerade that there was one by the King's command for Miss Chudleigh, the maid of honour with whom our gracious monarch has a mind to believe himself in love—so much in love that at one of the booths he gave her a fairing for her watch which cost him five and forty guineas, actually discharged out of his private purse and not charged on the civil list."

On the precise relations between the monarch and the fascinating maid of honour the records of the day are silent. Of course there are sly allusions from time to time in Walpole's letters, and although the professional retailer of gossip is not particular about strict veracity, there is something very significant in the piquant story he tells in a letter to Horace Mann a year and a half after the celebrated masquerade. "Two days ago," he writes, "at the Drawing-room, the gallant Orondates strode up to Miss Chudleigh and told her he was glad to have an opportunity of obeying her commands, that he had appointed her mother housekeeper at Windsor, and hoped she would not think a kiss too great a reward—against all precedent he kissed her in the circle. He has had a hankering these two years. Her life, which is now of thirty years' standing, has been a little

historic. Why should not experience and a charming face on her side, and near seventy years on his, produce a title ? ”

Mrs. Chudleigh was accordingly made housekeeper at Windsor Castle, and the appointment was duly chronicled in the *Gazette*. The salary was £800 a year, so that it may be said that Elizabeth looked very well after her parent, who enjoyed the sweets of office until her death in 1756. It is not uncharitable to surmise that, besides looking after her mother, Elizabeth had an eye to her own interests. She was certainly not the young lady to neglect them, especially when she had in her toils a monarch who, when his Queen was dying, and with almost her last breath hoped he would marry again, blubbered out, “Non, j’aurai des maîtresses.” Certainly if Walpole is correct in his rendering of the King’s words, “obeying her commands,” it would suggest that the astute Elizabeth did not overlook her opportunities, and that she received favours far beyond the forty-five-guinea watch and her mother’s appointment.

It must be confessed that one of Elizabeth’s weaknesses—some people might call it a virtue—was the accumulation of wealth or of articles representing wealth. As we have had previous occasion to remark, her presents from her admirers must have been numerous and valuable to enable her to invest in real property as she did. Naturally, then, the question arises, did his amorous Majesty befriend the young lady as well as her mother ? On this interesting point the magazine-writer whom we have already quoted remarks : “Equally unfounded were

probably the reports which consigned this lady to the arms of royalty itself; though there are not wanting persons who give an implicit faith to this tale, and apprehend that the then reigning foreign Sultana (the Countess of Walmoden) would have given place to our heroine but for a discovery that she possessed a certain enterprising spirit of intrigue which might, in such a situation, have rendered her interference in matters of State alike unavoidable and disagreeable." The last words quoted are significant. It is clear that Elizabeth's imperious and combative nature had already made her notorious; but though the King may have hesitated over conferring upon her a title the significance of which would have left no doubt as to their relations, it does not follow that the daring maid of honour's audacious sallies did not attract him. She certainly had not the stupidity and dulness of most of George's *maitresses*. Mr. Wright has assigned to her the credit of a piquant retort made at the fateful Ranelagh Garden masquerade. The King, provoked by the wayward damsel's costume and the soft charms it hardly pretended to conceal, requested permission to place his hand on her breast. "Your Majesty," said she, casting down her eyes slyly, "I can put it to a still softer place"; and she placed the hand of the expectant monarch on his own forehead. This story has been told of other sprightly ladies; but if it be really true, Elizabeth is the one most likely to have been its heroine. However this may be, there is very little ambiguity about the words which, according to Walpole, really were uttered by the lady some time

after the Jubilee masquerade. "Miss Chudleigh," he writes, "says there is some sense in belonging to a King who turns off an old mistress when he has got a new one." And here the matter may well be left.

Anything at this time was good enough to amuse the town. All was gaiety and frivolity, and the idlers were ready to swallow the most ridiculous story so long as it gave them something to talk about. In 1749 Elizabeth's exploit divided the talk with a remarkable hoax played by some wag whose identity has never been discovered, though Foote has had the credit of being the perpetrator. On January 16th the daily papers contained the following advertisement :

"At the New Theatre in the Haymarket, this present day, to be seen, a person who performs the several most surprising things following, viz. : First he takes a common walking-cane from any of the spectators, and thereon he plays the music of every instrument now in use, and likewise sings to surprising perfection. Secondly, he presents you with a common wine-bottle, which any of the spectators may first examine ; this bottle is placed on a table in the middle of the stage, and he (without any equivocation) goes into it, in the sight of all the spectators, and sings in it : during his stay in the bottle any person may handle it, and see plainly that it does not exceed a common tavern bottle."

The house was packed, but no one appeared on the stage, and the affair ended in the wrecking of the theatre, the making of a bonfire in the street, and the calling in of the Foot Guards to quell the riot.

It was added in a postscript that the performance

had been witnessed by most of the crowned heads of Asia, Africa, and Europe; and the operator promised, for a further gratuity, some other extraordinary exhibitions. In spite of the absurdity of this announcement, and of another advertisement in some of the papers, of the arrival of the wonderful Signor Jumpedo, who, among other things, undertook to jump down his own throat, no suspicion appears to have been entertained of the real character of the hoax, and at the hour advertised a very crowded audience had assembled in the theatre, a large portion of which consisted of persons of quality, and among them was the Duke of Cumberland. There was no music, and the only apparatus on the stage was a table covered with green baize, with a crimson quart bottle on it. The company sat quietly till towards seven o'clock, when they became extremely impatient, and the house resounded with cat-calls and other equally intelligible expressions of dissatisfaction. A man then came forward to announce that the performer had not yet made his appearance, and some one (it was said to have been Samuel Foote, who performed at this theatre, and was then in the boxes), apparently with the idea of pacifying the audience, said, "that the money would be returned if he did not come." A man in the pit shouted out at the same time waggishly that if they would come again the next night, and double the price, the conjurer would go into a pint bottle. Upon this a candle was thrown from one of the boxes on the stage, which was the signal for a general uproar. The ladies and the more peaceful visitors rushed out of the theatre, and escaped only with a general loss of hats,

coats, etc. The Duke of Cumberland lost his diamond-hilted sword, and, on this being known, some in the crowd shouted, "Billy the Butcher has lost his knife!" Those who remained in the theatre proceeded from one outrage to another, until they had broken up the benches, boxes, and every particle of woodwork that could be removed, and torn down the curtains and scenes, which were soon piled up in the street before the house in one immense bonfire. In the meantime the alarm had been given, and a party of Foot Guards hurried to the spot; but the rioters had fled, and the soldiers arrived only in time to warm themselves at the fire.

The next day John Potter, the proprietor of the theatre, inserted a letter in the newspapers, making an apology to the public for having let the house unwittingly to the impostor, and complaining of the injustice done to him personally by the destruction of his property; and Foote wrote a similar letter excusing himself. These letters were continued as advertisements during several days. But others took up the matter much more seriously, and for a week or two after the newspapers containing not infrequently burlesque announcements of extraordinary performances. "The Man in the Bottle" became immediately the hero of several satirical pamphlets on the folly and credulity of the age, besides making his appearance in ballads and caricatures. (Wright.)

CHAPTER X

Frederick's Court at Carlton House—Bubb Dodington and his Diary—
The earthquake in London and panic of the people—An awkward
occurrence in Windsor Castle—Ill-founded rumours regarding
Miss Chudleigh—Death of Frederick, Prince of Wales—Indiffer-
ence of the King—A shabby funeral—Elizabeth's appointment as
maid of honour confirmed—1749-51.

IN the year of the famous masquerade Frederick's Court was no longer confined to Leicester House, but extended to the far more convenient and palatial Carlton House, built on the site of the red-bricked building which the Prince bought of Lord Carlton in 1739, and which he used for official functions. The house stood opposite what is now Waterloo Place, looking northward and the forecourt was divided from Pall Mall by a long range of columns, handsome in themselves but supporting nothing. Hence the once famous lines :

Care colonne, qui siate qua ?
Non sapiami in verita.

thus Anglicised by Prince Hoare :

Dear little columns, all in a row,
What *do* you do there ?
Indeed we don't know.

Carlton House was conveniently situated, the resi-

dence of Lady Archie Hamilton, Frederick's *chère amie*, being so closely contiguous that apartments were built out from the lady's house so as to command a view from the windows of the palace gardens. These apartments, so it is asserted by Sir N. W. Wraxall, communicated with Carlton House itself.

In November 1749 we find his royal highness in a secret conclave held at Carlton House, making all the financial dispositions proper to be adopted on the demise of the King, his father, and even framing a new Civil List. At the close of these deliberations he binds his three assistants to abide by and support his plans, giving them his hand and making them each take each other's hands as well. The transaction is related by Dodington, who was himself one of the party, and was performed after dinner, which may perhaps form its best apology. It was at Carlton House that Frederick, Prince of Wales, in the lifetime of his father, George II., held his miniature Court, and amused himself with sketching out future administrations, in which his friends, the Duke of Queensberry, the Earl of Middlesex, "Jack" Spencer, Lord John Sackville, and Francis, Earl of Guildford, were to have their parts. Among the guests here in the time of Frederick, Prince of Wales, was Pope, who paid his royal highness very many compliments. "I wonder," said the Prince, "that you, who are so severe on kings, should be so complimentary to me." "Ah, sir," replied the crafty poet, "that is because I like the lion before his claws are full grown."

On the south side of Pall Mall, in a house which overlooked the Park and its gardens, resided Bubb

Dodington, afterwards Lord Melcombe, whom Pope immortalised as "Bubo." Lord Hervey tells us, in his "Memoirs," that his house "stood close to the garden which the Prince had bought of Lord Chesterfield," and that "during Dodington's favour the Prince had suffered him to make a door out of his house into his garden, which, upon the first decay of his interest, the Prince shut up—building and planting before Dodington's house, and changing every lock to his own house, to which he had formerly given Dodington's keys." Bubb Dodington's vanity exposed him to the shafts of the wits, and when, before his elevation to the peerage, he was appointed ambassador to Spain, Lord Chesterfield told him it would not do, as the Spaniards could not suppose a man to possess any dignity whose name was a monosyllable. "You must make an addition to it." "But how?" answered Dodington anxiously. "Oh," replied Lord Chesterfield, "I can help you to one; suppose you make it *Silly Bubb*." Bubb Dodington's superlative opinion of himself is admirably reflected by more than one entry in his diary, one of which is quoted upon a later page.

During the following year the gay spirits of the Court were checked by an event which put an end for a time to masquerades, routs, ridottos, gaming, and fashionable follies generally. London in 1750 was visited by an earthquake, and several smart shocks were felt throughout England. The weather at the beginning of the year 1750 had been unusually stormy and tempestuous. On February 8th the inhabitants of London were alarmed by a rumbling noise, and a shock, which shook all the houses with such violence

that the house-bells rang and the furniture and utensils were moved from their places. On the same day of the next month a second shock was felt between the hours of five and six in the morning, which was considerably more intense than the former, and caused the greatest consternation, because it awoke people from their sleep. Smollett, who was present in London at the time, tells us that it was preceded by a succession of thick, low flashes of lightning, and a rumbling noise like that of a heavy carriage rolling over a hollow pavement. "The shock itself," he says, "consisted of repeated vibrations which lasted some seconds, and violently shook every house from top to bottom. Many persons started from their beds, and ran to their doors and windows in dismay." The alarm occasioned by these two earthquakes was seized upon by the religious enthusiasts of the day as an opportunity for admonishing their fellow-countrymen against the immorality and profaneness which then so widely pervaded English society, and they hesitated not to declare that the earthquakes had been sent as special marks of the displeasure of Heaven against the prevailing sins of the people. The Church, in some degree, caught up the same cry, and a pastoral letter of the Bishop of London pointed the moral in severe strictures. Books on earthquakes and their effects were issued from the press with great rapidity and were bought up with equal eagerness, and people began to look forward with apprehension to the probability of a third shock, which might be still more severe.

These apprehensions were gaining ground towards

the end of March, when a soldier of the Life Guards, who had been driven mad by attending the preaching of religious enthusiasts, ran about the town, crying out that on the same day four weeks after the last shock (which would be Thursday, April 5th) another earthquake, of a much more formidable character, would swallow up the whole metropolis and destroy its inhabitants, as a punishment for their sins ; and that Westminster Abbey would be buried in the ruins and disappear for ever. The prophet was arrested and placed in a madhouse, but this did not calm the fears of the multitude, which increased as the fatal day approached ; and even many of those who had first combated these ridiculous fears began insensibly to imbibe the contagion. The popular credulity was so great that on April 1st (an appropriate day enough) some hundreds of people went through a heavy rain to Edmonton, upon the report that a hen had laid an egg there the day before, on which was inscribed in large capital letters the words, "Beware of the third Shock !" During the following days many people who possessed the means of absenting themselves left London under different excuses, and repaired to various parts of the kingdom. *Read's Weekly Journal* of April 7th informs us that "Thirty coaches, filled with genteel-looking people, were, at Wednesday noon, at Slough, running away from the prognosticated earthquake," and adds, "and it is known that 34 P——s, 94 C——rs, and 2 P——s of —— fled to different parts of the kingdom this week on the same account, in order to avoid the vengeance denounced against them by a late pastoral letter." All the roads leading from

London to the country were thronged ; and in the course of Wednesday afternoon whole families locked up their houses and went into the open fields outside the metropolis, which were filled with an incredible number of people assembled in chairs and carriages, as well as on foot, who waited in trembling suspense until the return of day convinced most of them of the groundlessness of their apprehensions. Many, however, still insisted that it was a mistake in the day, and that the earthquake would occur on Sunday, the 8th, as they should have counted the day of the month, and not that of the week. Of course it was a case of the "Devil was sick," etc., and when nothing happened, the people went back to their houses, resumed their usual habits, and the Court recovered its spirits and slid back into the old free-and-easy life, and the maids of honour of the Princess of Wales were as frivolous as ever.

Following the appointment of Mrs. Chudleigh as housekeeper at Windsor Castle came an awkward occurrence which the detractors of Miss Chudleigh in after-years did not fail to turn to account. We quote again from *The British Magazine and Review* the least rancorous of Elizabeth's many biographies : " Another circumstance of an extraordinary nature, which happened some time after her separation from Mr. Hervey, deserves particular notice. A female infant was found on the stairs leading to the apartments of Miss Chudleigh's mother, in Windsor Castle, and, being taken care of by that lady, as she grew up lived with her daughter in the capacity of a servant about her person, and was well known to those who were admitted to the



REPRESENTATIONS OF MISS CHUDLEIGH AS IPHIGENIA AT THE RANELACH MASQUERADE
 (From the collection of Mr. A. M. Broadley)

lady's intimacy, by the name of *Elizabeth*, a name by which only she was distinguished, without the addition of a surname. This young woman continued with her till her death, which happened when she was about twenty : and this attachment gave rise to many reports." It may be safely said that there is not the slightest foundation for the scandalous stories which, arising out of the incident, were bandied about to the detriment of Miss Chudleigh. Whatever faults Elizabeth may be credited with, she was certainly no fool, and she was the last woman in the world to have been guilty of such an act of folly. It was certainly true that she took great notice of the little girl, and afterwards, when she became Duchess of Kingston, had her to live with her at Thoresby, but there is nothing in this. The child was brought up by Mrs. Chudleigh, and when the lady died in 1756, it was not extraordinary that the poor little foundling should be taken care of by Elizabeth simply out of pure kindness of heart. But Miss Chudleigh was always considered a fair mark for the scandal-mongers. George Selwyn, whose reputation as an eighteenth-century wit is hardly borne out by the specimens of it which have been preserved, wrote, on Miss Chudleigh crying in the drawing-room on the death of her mother :

What filial piety! What mournful grace
For a lost parent, sits on Chudleigh's face!
Fair virgin, weep no more, your anguish smother!
You in this town can never want a mother.

In March 1751 the Court at Leicester House and at Carlton House was thrown into gloom by the

sudden death of Frederick, Prince of Wales, and for a time all gaiety was suspended. The Prince had been ill of a pleurisy, but had recovered. He attended the House of Lords, and returned to Carlton House very hot, where he unrobed, put on a light, unaired frock and waistcoat, went to Kew, walking on a very bitter day, returning to Carlton House tired, and laid down for three hours upon a couch in a very cold room that opened into the garden. Lord Egmont told him how dangerous it was, but the Prince did not mind him. He had a relapse of his pleurisy, but during the two days following the attack was better, so much so that cards were played in an adjoining room. Between nine and ten he was seized with a violent fit of coughing, in the presence of his physician, Dr. Wilmot, and his surgeon, Cæsar Hawkins, who, as will be remembered, attended Miss Chudleigh at Chelsea. "Sir," said the physician, "I hope this will be over in a quarter of an hour, and that your royal highness will have a good night." The great surgeon, however, was not so sanguine. As he was going out of the room he said, "Here is something I don't like." The cough continued; the Prince laid his hand on his stomach and said, "*Je sens la mort.*" The page who held him up felt him shiver, and cried out, "The Prince is going!" The Princess was at the foot of the bed, and, snatching up a candle, she ran to him, but before she got to the head of the bed he was dead.

"The King, his father," says Wraxall, "though he never went to visit him during the whole progress of his illness, sent constantly to make inquiries, and

received accounts every two hours of his state and condition. But he was so far from despairing altogether of Frederick's recovery that, on the contrary, he considered such an event as highly probable down to the very evening on which his royal highness actually expired, for I know that only a short time preceding the King, being engaged in conversation with the Countess of Yarmouth when the page entered announcing that the Prince was better, 'There now,' said his Majesty, turning to her, 'I told you he would not die.' On the evening of his decease, March 20th, George II. had repaired, according to his usual custom, to Lady Yarmouth's apartments, situated on the ground floor in St. James's Palace, where a party of persons of distinction of both sexes generally assembled for the purpose. His Majesty had just sat down to play, and was engaged at cards, when a page despatched from Leicester House arrived, bringing information that the Prince was no more. He received the intelligence without testifying violent emotion. Then, rising, he crossed the room to Lady Yarmouth's table, who was likewise occupied at play, and, leaning over her chair, said to her in a low tone of voice in German, 'Fritz ist dode' (Freddy is dead). Having communicated it to her, he instantly withdrew. She followed him, the company broke up, and the news became public."

If the King appeared to be somewhat callous over the death of his son, he was made conscious of the devotion of the Princess to her husband during his last hours. *The Gentleman's Magazine* probably did not exaggerate when it stated that the Princess, "who so eminently

excels in everything that is truly admirable, discovered an almost unexampled tenderness for his royal highness during his illness, and has never been in bed the whole time, notwithstanding she is in a delicate state, till this morning at six o'clock, and rose again at eight."

Bubb Dodington has left an interesting record of his experience at the funeral of the Prince, with the usual intervention of the Earl Marshal, whose special duty at state functions is apparently a desire to show his incompetency. "Lord Limerick consulted me," writes Dodington, "about walking at the funeral. By the Earl Marshal's order, published in the common newspaper of the day (which, with the ceremonial not published till ten o'clock, I keep by me), neither he, as an Irish peer, nor I as a privy councillor, could walk. He expressed a strong resolution to pay his last duty to his royal friend, if practicable. I begged him to stay till I could get the ceremonial; he did, and we there found, in a note, that we might walk. Which note, published seven or eight hours before the attendance required, was all the notice that lords, their sons, and privy councillors had (except those appointed to particular functions) that they would be admitted to walk. At seven o'clock I went, according to the order, to the House of Lords. The many slights that the poor remains of a much-loved master and friend had met, and who was now preparing the last trouble he could give his enemies, sunk me so low that for the first hour I was incapable of making any observations.

"The procession began, and (except the lords appointed to hold the pall and attend the chief

mourner, and those of his own domestics) when the attendants were called in their ranks, there was not one English lord, not *one* bishop, and only one Irish lord (Limerick), two sons of dukes (Earl of Drumlandrig and Lord Robert Bertie), one baron's son (Mr. Edgcumbe), and two privy councillors (Sir John Rushout and myself) out of these great bodies, to make a show of duty to a Prince so great in rank and expectation. While we were in the House of Lords it rained very hard, as it has done all the season ; when we came into Palace Yard the way to the Abbey was lined with soldiers, but the managers had not afforded the smallest covering over our heads ; but, by good fortune, while we were from under cover, it held up. We went in at the south-east door, and turned short into Henry the VII.'s Chapel. The service was performed without either anthem or organ. So ended this sad day. *Quem semper acerbum—semper honoratum.*

“The corpse and bowels were removed last night to the Prince's lodgings at the House of Lords ; the whole bed-chamber were ordered to attend them from ten in the morning till the *enterrement*. There was not the attention to order the Green-cloth to provide them a bit of bread ; and these gentlemen, of the first rank and distinction, in discharge of their last sad duty to a loved and a loving master, were forced to bespeak a great cold dinner from a common tavern in the neighbourhood. At three o'clock, indeed, they vouchsafed to think of a dinner, and ordered one ; but the disgrace was complete, the tavern dinner was paid for, and given to the poor. N.B.—The Duke of

Somerset was chief mourner, notwithstanding the flourishing state of the royal family."

It was soon after this that the diarist made this entry in his diary referred to in the earlier part of this chapter, and in which he displayed such an exalted sense of his own importance. It is as follows :

"The Princess sent for me to attend her between eight and nine o'clock," he records. "I went to Leicester House expecting a small company and a little music, but found nobody but her royal highness. She made me draw a stool and sit by the fireside. Soon after came in the Prince of Wales and Prince Edward, and then the Lady Augusta, all in an undress, and took their stools and sat round the fire with us. We continued talking of familiar occurrences till between ten and eleven with the ease and unreservedness and unconstraint as if one had dropped into a sister's home that had a family to pass the evening. It is much to be wished that the Princess counselled familiarity with more people of a certain knowledge of the world. The Princess's attention to me seems an indication of a good heart, as if she resolved, as far as it is in her power, that the Prince should not forget those who were beloved by and deserved well of his father."

It cannot be said that the death of Frederick made any deep impression, or that his loss was regarded as a calamity. Frederick had been struck by a cricket or tennis-ball, it is uncertain which, some three years before, and the popular idea was that this blow had something to do with his death. The people about the Court evidently had their doubts, and some one

asked the Princess if the body was to be opened. "That," said she, "is what the King pleases."

What the nation thought is fairly expressed by the well-known lines which were repeated with much relish by those who detested the Hanoverian rule :

Here lies Fred,
Who was alive and is dead.
Had it been his father
I had much rather;
Had it been his brother,
Still better than another;
Had it been his sister,
No one would have missed her;
Had it been the whole generation,
Still better for the nation:
But since 'tis only Fred,
There's no more to be said.

What Walpole termed "funeral dirges" were written by Oxford and Cambridge undergraduates on the Prince's death, and the faithful Bubb Dodington did not fail to burst out into a funeral oration, and, after the Court had gone into mourning for some weeks, gaiety resumed its sway, and the observant Lady Jane Coke, who was closely associated with King George's Court, has something to say on the important subject of the new fashions for ladies. She minutely describes the *sacque*, which at that time was a novelty. This stately garment was a wide loose gown, open in front all the way, and hanging from the shoulders to the ground, generally set in by a wide pleat at the back and gathered in folds over the hooped petticoat. The hoops varied in size from small hoops for undress to the larger hoops for full dress, or, as Lady Jane quaintly styles it,

“when I am to be set out.” The hoops were formed of whalebone, and the wearers doubled them round in front, or lifted them up on each side, when they entered a door or carriage. The hair was trimmed close round the face, which was encircled with curls, one or two falling behind, and surmounted by a little cap, similar to that immortalised by Mary, Queen of Scots.

An item to be noted was the reappointment of Elizabeth Chudleigh as maid of honour to the Princess Augusta—a matter of etiquette and form, merely as consequent upon the death of Prince Frederick, the Court having to be reconstituted. It was not long before Frederick was forgotten, and in the meantime the Princess Augusta’s womanly and wifely conduct brought about a reconciliation between her and her father-in-law, Walpole writing: “The King and Princess are grown as fond as if they had never been of different parties, or rather, as people who always had been of different. She discountenances all opposition and he all ambition. Prince George, who with his two eldest brothers is to be lodged at St. James’s, is speedily to be created Prince of Wales.”

CHAPTER XI

Elizabeth's rivals—The beautiful Gunning sisters—A costly dinner at White's, the talk of the town—The Gunnings hoaxed—Elizabeth Gunning marries the Duke of Hamilton, Miss Chudleigh's old lover—Clandestine Mayfair marriages in Keith's chapel—Fanny Murray's expensive sandwich—Maria Gunning and Lord Coventry—The greed of the Fitzroys—The quarrels of Lady Caroline Petersham—1751-2.

IN these days nothing caused more excitement in court circles than the advent of a fresh beauty, and Elizabeth Chudleigh, who was now thirty-one and who had been much in evidence for eight years, saw herself early in 1751 eclipsed by the superior charms of two Irish girls, who were, undoubtedly, more beautiful than Miss Chudleigh was at her best, but who had no claim either to her wit or intelligence. These were the beautiful Gunning sisters. Maria Gunning, who was even lovelier than her younger sister, was anything but brilliant, so far as intellect was concerned. Of this beautiful pair Walpole, who was no mean judge, says, "I think their being so handsome and both such perfect figures is their chief excellence, for singly I have seen much handsomer women than either."

We may be quite sure that the sisters were "toasts" at a celebrated dinner at White's, which caused almost

as much talk at the time as the ladies themselves. White's prided itself on its cook, and every member had to subscribe a guinea a year towards expenses of the kitchen. The particular dinner to which we refer was a folly of seven young men, who bespoke it to the utmost extent of expense, carrying their mad extravagance so far as to taste but one glass out of each bottle of champagne. The menu is a curiosity, and those who care to do so may find it interesting to compare the prices of 1751 with those of 1911. Only the solids are given, and costly as some of the dishes were, they did not represent half the bill which the seven young *gourmets* ran up. We reproduce the items exactly as they are given in *The Gentleman's Magazine*.

	£	s.	d.
Bread and beer	0	4	0
Potage de Tortue	0	16	6
Calipash	1	1	0
Calipees	0	16	0
Un Pate de Jambon de Bayone	2	10	0
Potage Julien verd	1	12	0
Two turbot to remove the soops	2	0	0
Haunch of Venison	2	12	0
Palais de mouton	0	6	0
Selle de mouton	0	6	0
Salade	0	4	0
Saucisses aux ecreoisses	0	18	0
Boudin blanc a la reine	0	16	0
Petits pates a l'Espaniol	1	10	0
Coteletts a la Cardinal	0	16	0
Selle d'agneau glacé aux-cocomtres	2	18	0
Saumon a la chambord	1	11	0
Fillets de Saules Royales	1	10	0
Une bisque de lait de maqueraux	1	15	0
Un lambert aux innocents	1	10	0
Des perdrix sauce vin de champaign	1	10	0
Poulets a le Russiene	0	10	6
Ris de veau en arlequin	0	18	0
Quée d'agneau a la Montaban	0	10	6
Dix cailles	2	2	0
Un lapreau	0	10	6
Un phésant	0	12	0
Dix ortolens	7	4	0

The wines consumed were champagne, which figured out at £7 10s.; Burgundy at a paltry 6s.; hock at 12s. 6d.; Cape at £2; claret, £1 10s.; in addition to Madeira, Sack, and Cyprus, which, however, are hardly worth mentioning, as six shillings covered the cost of the three! Usquebaugh, which some authorities term the original of the modern whisky, is set down at 10s. Vegetarians may perhaps be pleased to learn that the most expensive dish was "Fruits of various sorts forced." For this delicacy no less than sixteen guineas were paid! The total amount of the bill was £81 11s. 6d., or a little over eleven guineas a head. The Lucullus of the twentieth century has not done much better than this. One wonders which of the "seven young gentlemen," as the chronicler of the time describes them, drank the beer, and how many headaches there were the next morning.

There was certainly no secret about the object which brought the Gunning sisters to England. Mrs. Piozzi, writing in her lively fashion concerning a Mr. Head who did a little smuggling, says: "His real name was Plunkett, a low Irish parasite dependent on Mr. Thrale (Mrs. Piozzi's first husband and Dr. Johnson's friend), primarily, and, I suppose, secondly, on Mr. Murphy (Arthur Murphy, the dramatist), and who was employed by them in various schemes of pleasure, as you men call profligacy, and on this occasion was deputed to amuse them by personating some *lord*, whom his patrons had promised to introduce to the beautiful Miss Gunnings when they first came over, with intent to make their fortunes. He was received accordingly and the girls played off their best airs and cast kind

looks on his introducers from time to time : till the fellow, wearied and disgusted at his ill-acted character, burst out on a sudden as they sat at tea, and cried, 'Catamaran, young gentlemen, with two shoes and never a heel, when will you have done with silly jokes, now? Ladies,' turning to the future peeresses, 'never mind these merry boys, but if you really can afford to pay for some incomparable silk stockings or true India handkerchiefs, *here they are now*,' rummaging his smuggler's pockets : but the girls jumped up and turned them all three into the street, where Thrale and Murphy cursed their senseless assistant and called him Head, like *lucus a non lucendo*, because they swore he had none. The duchess [of Hamilton], however, never did forgive this impudent frolic ; Lady Coventry, more prudently, pretended to forget it."

The Gunnings were the sensation of the hour, and their fame was not confined to Court circles. They could not walk in the Park or go to Vauxhall but such mobs followed them that they were generally driven away to escape the too flattering curiosity and admiration of the unwashed multitude. Walpole, writing to Horace Mann, says : "I shall tell you a new story of the Gunnings, who make more noise than any of their predecessors since the days of Helen, though neither of them, nor anything about them, have yet been *terririma belli causa*. They went the other day to see Hampton Court ; as they were going into the Beauty Room, another company arrived ; the housekeeper said : 'This way, ladies ; here are the beauties.' The Gunnings flew into a passion, and asked her what she

meant ; that they came to see the palace, not to be showed as a sight themselves."

It was not long before the court gallants, one of whose amusements was to dangle after fair ladies, married and unmarried, were in hot pursuit of the beautiful sisters, and with speedy success, for Maria was captured by the Earl of Coventry and Elizabeth by the Duke of Hamilton, Miss Chudleigh's lover in her romantic days. Between her rejection of his grace of Hamilton in 1748 and the arrival of the two attractive Gunnings in 1751 Elizabeth must have met the duke often enough. But the romance of their secret engagement, and the causes which led to its non-fulment, had probably died out of the hearts of both. The duke solaced himself by going the pace, and Miss Chudleigh was now only concerned with advancing her material interests. News of her husband's doings came at rare intervals, but he attempted no direct communication with her, and she was quite easy in her mind with regard to any interference on his part. Captain Hervey appears to have been equally indifferent, and for a good reason—he was interested in another quarter, and was perfectly contented that his wife should go her own way and not trouble him. But with all Elizabeth's frivolity and recklessness, and despite her matter-of-fact way of looking at life and making the best of this world, her heart must have beaten quicker when the news, which convulsed court circles at the end of February, reached her, for on the 14th of that month—an appropriate date enough—the Duke of Hamilton was married to Elizabeth Gunning in hot haste at Keith's Chapel

Mayfair, at "half an hour after twelve o'clock at night."

The hurry, the hour, and the clandestine nature of the marriage could not fail to remind the maid of honour of her own wedding at quiet, lonely Lainston, and of the trouble that secret wedding had brought upon her. Save for this mistake of hers, she most assuredly would have been her grace of Hamilton long ere this. But it is pretty certain Elizabeth was not one to cry her eyes out at lost opportunities, and when she met the newly made Duchess of Hamilton she showed not an atom of jealousy.

The duke's marriage and the circumstances attending it made an immense sensation. Two days before, the duke was at a "house-warming" assembly, given by Lord Chesterfield to show his new mansion, and conspicuous in the gay throng was Elizabeth Gunning, whom the duke had first seen at a masquerade, and for whom he had conceived a mad passion. The duke fell to playing faro at one end of the room while he made violent love at the other; that is, says Walpole, "he saw neither the bank nor his own cards, which were of three hundred pounds each, and he was soon the loser of a thousand. Two nights afterwards he found himself so impatient, he sent for a parson. The doctor refused to perform the ceremony without licence or ring, so the duke swore he would send for the archbishop." But as this would have involved more delay, the difficulty was solved with the assistance of Dr. Keith, the notorious marriage-monger of Mayfair.

This astute and enterprising personage was a clergy-

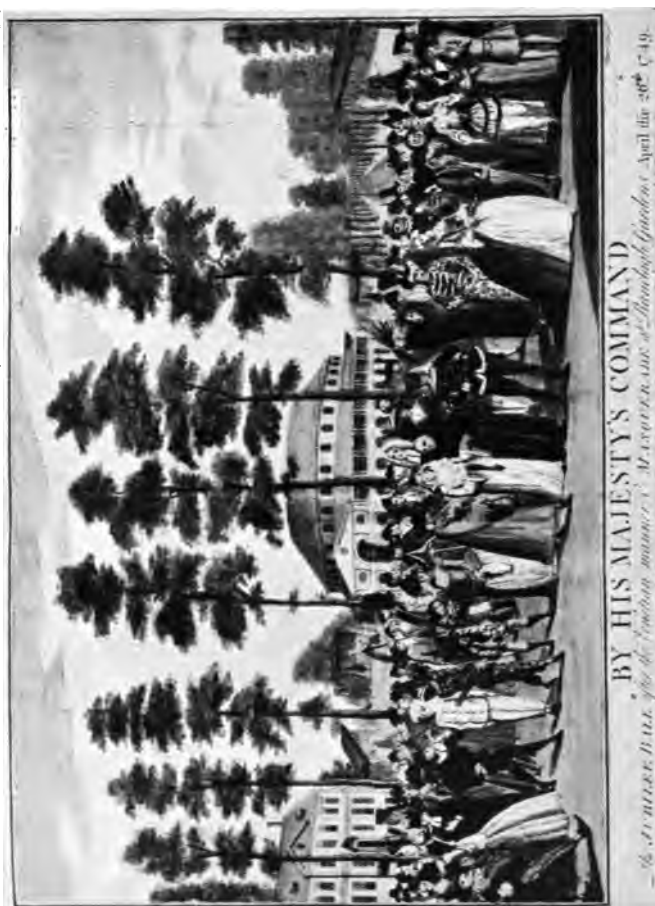
man from the north of the Tweed who had been driven from Scotland on account of his attachment to episcopacy. He had set up a marriage office in the Fleet Prison, but had been forced to abandon it. He found, however, a better opening in the west of London and a richer class of customers. It is said that, in one morning during the Whitsun holidays, he united in the silken bonds of matrimony a greater number of loving couples than had been married at any ten churches within the "bills of mortality"; but this surely must have been an exaggeration.

While in a debtor's prison, of which he had a long experience—some fifteen years, it is said—Keith kept a keen eye on business. During his incarceration his wife died, and he kept her corpse embalmed and unburied for many months, and by that means ingeniously contrived to turn the circumstance into an advertisement of his trade. At all events, here is a record of his proceedings taken from *The Daily Advertiser* of January 30th, 1750: "We are informed that Mrs. Keith's corpse was removed from her husband's house in May Fair, the middle of October last, to an apothecary's in South Audley Street, where she lies in a room hung with mourning, and is to continue there till Mr. Keith can attend the funeral. The way to Mr. Keith's chapel is through Piccadilly, by the end of St. James's Street, and down Clarges Street, and turn on the left hand." Then follows the announcement that the marriages are still carried on as usual by "another regular clergyman," to the great relief, doubtless, of anxious couples.

In *The Connoisseur* for October 1754 appeared the

following witty and satirical remarks apropos of the Act which had just been passed for preventing clandestine marriages and its effects on Keith's chapel: "I received a scheme from my good friend Mr. Keith, whose chapel the late Marriage Act has rendered useless on its original principles. The reverend gentleman, seeing that all husbands and wives are henceforth to be put up on sale, proposed shortly to open his chapel on a new and more fashionable plan. As the ingenious Messrs. Henson and Bever have lately opened, in different quarters of the town, repositories for all horses to be sold by auction, Mr. Keith intends setting up a repository for all young males and females to be disposed of in marriage. From these studs (as the doctor himself expresses it) a lady of beauty may be coupled to a man of fortune, and an old gentleman who has a colt's tooth remaining may match himself with a tight young filly. The doctor makes no doubt but his chapel will turn out even more to his advantage on this new plan than on its first institution, provided he can secure his scheme to himself, and reap the benefits of it without interlopers from the *fleet* (*sic*). To prevent his design being pirated, he intends petitioning the Parliament that, as he has been so great a sufferer by the new Marriage Act, the sole right of opening a repository of this sort may be vested in him, and this his place of residence in May Fair may still continue the grant for marriages." Here follows a "Catalogue of Males and Females to be disposed of in Marriage to the best bidder, at Mr. Keith's Repository, in May Fair :

"A young lady of £100,000 fortune—to be bid



THE MASQUERADE AT RANELAGH GARDENS, 1749
 (From the collection of Mr. A. M. Broadley)

for by none under the degree of peers, or a commoner of at least treble the income.

"A homely thing, who can read, write, cast accounts, and make an excellent pudding—this lot to be bid for by none but country parsons.

"A very pretty young woman, but a good deal in debt, would be glad to marry a member of Parliament, or a Jew.

"A blood of the first-rate, very wild, and has run loose all his life, but is now broke, and will prove very tractable.

"Five Templars—all Irish. No one to bid for these lots of less than £10,000 fortune."

The concluding announcement in the article is as follows :

"Wanted, a dozen of young fellows and one dozen of young women, willing to marry to advantage ; to go to Nova Scotia."

The register-books at St. George's serve to show that the private marriages celebrated in Dr. Keith's chapel were not confined to the lower or rougher element, but were often taken advantage of by the "upper ten thousand." It was a time for clandestine marriages. The ladies of that day were imperious and headstrong, and in a hurry to marry, whether leisurely repentance followed or not. One of the impulsive belles who knew no law but her own whim for the moment was Fanny Murray, who, it was rumoured, was about to rush into a secret marriage. She had notoriety, if not celebrity, thrust upon her by the infamous poem, the "Essay on Woman," said to be by Wilkes but really the pro-

duction of the clever profligate Potter, son of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the first words of which are "Awake, my Fanny"—meaning the lady in question. Miss Murray had her beaux, after the fashion of other ladies; and she had a temper too. One night she was complaining of want of money, and Sir Richard Atkins, one of her admirers, immediately gave her a twenty-pound note. The offer enraged rather than appeased her bad humour. "Damn your twenty pounds! What does it signify?" she exclaimed, and with flushed cheeks clapped it between two pieces of bread and butter and ate it, thus unconsciously anticipating Lord Sandwich in his invention of the popular stay for the appetite of modern days. The lively Kitty Fisher has been made the heroine of the bank-note sandwich story; but if the story was true of her, she was certainly not the first to waste good money on bad food. Cleopatra did the same sort of thing much more splendidly many years before.

At last even the people of rank and "quality," the inhabitants of Mayfair, grew frightened at their own practices, and as a consequence a Bill was introduced into Parliament forbidding clandestine marriages. The Act itself was passed in 1753, but its operation was delayed until Lady Day 1754, and on the day previous to its coming into force no less than sixty-one marriages were registered. During this period of suspense Walpole, writing to Montagu, says: "The Duchess of Argyll" (by this time the Duke of Hamilton was dead, and his widow again a duchess) "harangues against the Marriage Bill not

taking place" (*i.e.* effect) "immediately, and is persuaded that all the girls will go off before next Ladyday."

Maria's engagement to Lord Coventry was quite orthodox and devoid of romance. Lord Chesterfield takes notice of the love-affair in writing to Solomon Dayrolles, and a passage merits quoting, if only for its reference to one of the never-ending series of quarrels between Lady Caroline Petersham and her bosom friend, "Pollard" Ashe. . . . "Your friend, the eldest Miss Gunning, carries on her negotiation in all public places with Lord Coventry. The treaty must surely be near a conclusion one way or another, but whether it will be final or only a 'provisional' one is not yet clear. . . . Miss Ashe is happily reconciled to Lady Caroline Petersham, who had broke with her upon account of her indiscretion, but who has taken her under her protection again upon the assurances that she is 'as good as married' to Mr. Wortley Montagu, who seems so puzzled between Le Chatelet in France and his wife in England that it is not yet known in favour of which he will determine." On another occasion Chesterfield writes, also to Dayrolles: "Lord Coventry, who moved the Address in our House, did it well enough, though agitated at the same time by the two strong passions of fear and love, Miss Gunning being seated on one side of him and the House on the other. Her mother told Lord Granville, who sat next to her, that she was glad, for her daughter's sake, that my lord had got so well through it, for that the poor girl was ready to faint away."

Maria Gunning's marriage to Lord Coventry took place a month after that of her sister, and a few days previous to Maria's wedding the newly created duchess was presented at Court, and the crowd was so great that even the noble mob in the drawing-room clambered upon chairs and tables to look at her. There were mobs at their doors to see them get into their chairs; and for days afterwards people went early to the theatre to get places when it was known they were to be present.

From the gossipers' point of view the duchess was not so attractive as the countess. The younger sister was far more level-headed than the elder one, and was never betrayed into the eccentricities of speech and conduct which made Lady Coventry the amusement of the tattlers. The countess admirably exemplifies the type of the vain, frivolous, emotional, neurotic lady of fashion of those days. We may be sure that she was at once attacked by "vapours" directly she was annoyed, and that her husband did not find his marriage a bed of roses. For all that one cannot help liking the impulsive Irish girl, with her amusing misuse of words and her naive blunders, of which she was wholly unconscious. For all her frivolity she was not vicious, and no scandal attaches to her name, despite her intimacy with Lady Caroline Petersham, who was not distinguished for fidelity to her lord.

Some three months after her marriage Lady Coventry took a trip to Paris with Lady Caroline, and the doings of the two ladies in the gay capital furnished many a story for the retailers of gossip at home.

In the summer of 1752 there would seem to have been a general exodus of the court ladies to the Continent. Walpole, writing on July 27th, says: "Our beauties are travelling Paris-ward; Lady Caroline Petersham and Lady Coventry are just gone thither. It will scarce be possible for the latter to make as much noise there as she and her sister have in England. It is literally true that a shoemaker at Worcester got two guineas and a half by showing a shoe that he was making for the countess at a penny a piece."

The visit to Paris extended to October, and at the end of the month they were back in London, and our vivacious scribe did not fail to chronicle the fact in his own inimitable way: "Our beauties are returned," he writes to Horace Mann, "and have done no execution. The French would not conceive that Lady Caroline Petersham ever had been handsome, nor that my Lady Coventry has much pretence to be so now. Poor Lady Coventry was under piteous disadvantage, for besides being very silly, ignorant of the world, breeding, speaking no French, and suffered to wear neither red nor powder, she had that perpetual drawback upon her beauty, her lord, who is sillier in a wise way, as ignorant, ill-bred, and speaking very little French himself—just enough to show how ill-bred he is. The Duke de Luxemburg told him he had called up my Lady Coventry's coach; my Lord replied: 'Vous avez fort bien fait.' He is jealous, prude, and scrupulous. At a dinner at Sir John Bland's, before sixteen persons, he coursed his wife round the table, on suspecting she had stolen on a

little red, seized her, scrubbed it off by force with a napkin, and then told her that, since she had deceived him and broke her promise, he would carry her back directly to England. They were pressed to stay for the great fête at St. Cloud ; he excused himself, ' because it would make him miss a music-meeting at Worcester,' and she excused herself from the fireworks at Madame Pompadour's ' because it was her dancing-master's hour.' I will tell you but one more anecdote, and I think you cannot be imperfect in your ideas of them. The Maréchale de Lowendahl was pleased with an English fan Lady Coventry had, who very civilly gave it him ; my lord made her write for it again next morning ' because he had given it her before marriage, and her parting with it would make an irreparable breach, and send an old one in the room of it.' She complains to everybody she meets, ' How odd it is that my lord should use her so ill, when she knows he has so great a regard that he would die for her, and when he was so good as to marry her without a shilling.' ” It was not without a cause that Lord Coventry objected to his wife painting her face. The use of white plaster and other toilette nostrums became quite a mania with the beautiful countess, and it is said that her early death was in a large measure due to her immoderate use of the dangerous cosmetics then in vogue.

Lady Caroline Petersham's beauty was of the vigorous full-blown type which lasts and even improves up to the forties. Lady Caroline was more " gloriously handsome " in the year 1752 and more lively than ever. Wherever there was anything worth seeing or worth

having her ladyship was near at hand. She showed herself a true Fitzroy. Her father, the Duke of Grafton, inherited the propensities of the Castlemaine, who was a veritable daughter of the horse-leech. His grace had an hereditary pension of £9,000 a year, granted from the Excise, and £4,700 a year from the Post Office, which continued to be paid till a comparatively recent date. The former pension was redeemed in 1855 by a payment of £198,777, and the latter in 1856 by a payment of £91,181. There was also a very lucrative sinecure in the family, which the Duke of Grafton surrendered in 1795 for an annuity of £870 a year.

The Graftons were hereditary rangers of Whittlebury Forest, formerly one of the most extensive of the royal domains, and when the grant of the forest was made to the first duke, the timber was reserved to the Crown. In the early part of the reign of George III. the Navy was greatly in want of timber, and a survey was made of all the timber in the Royal Forest, including Whittlebury. A warrant was issued from the Treasury to cut down a quantity of trees in Whittlebury ; but as the unfortunate official who was charged with the execution of the order did not bring the order in his pocket, the Duke of Grafton stopped him in his work, and insisted on his dismissal from the public service. Junius, writing on this transaction, exclaims, "In what language shall I address so black, so cowardly a tyrant ? The Lords of the Treasury recall their warrant ; the Deputy Surveyor is ruined for doing his duty ; the oaks keep their ground ; the King is defrauded ; and the Navy of England may perish for

want of the best and finest timber in the island ! This noble duke, who succeeded in defrauding the King of the timber urgently required, was at that very time receiving no less than £18,770 a year in hereditary pensions, and £3,780 a year as Receiver-General of the Profits of the Seals in the King's Bench and Common Pleas, besides £236 a year from the Crown as a salary for taking care of Whittlebury, while the Crown paid two deputies £130 a year each to do the work for him !” Notwithstanding the greed of the male members of this ducal line and the absence of scruples on the part of the ladies, the early Fitzroys no doubt were proud of their family motto, “The ornament and reward of virtue,” and were unconscious of its irony.

In the early part of 1751 Lady Caroline had her last quarrel with Miss Ashe, for in July the little lady ran away with Edward Wortley Montagu, and the two were married in Keith's chapel, Mayfair. The lively associate of Elizabeth Chudleigh in many a frolic both in London and Tunbridge Wells had very ill-luck in her marriage. Poor little “Pollard” Ashe deserved a better fate. She was probably not vicious, though she enjoyed life to the full, as it was presented to her, and, like all the ladies of the Court, took no thought of the morrow. Her scamp of a husband forsook her, and, to quote Elizabeth Montagu, “Poor Miss Ashe, like the forsaken Ariadne, wept on a foreign shore.” After his death she found consolation in a marriage with a captain in the Royal Navy.

Lady Caroline's temper was easily upset, but we hear of no more escapades in company with Miss Chudleigh. So far as the ladies of the Court were concerned

Elizabeth's exploit at the Jubilee masquerade did her more harm than good, and it is highly probable her former friends looked at her a little askance. Lady Caroline no doubt thought a private intrigue was nothing so bad as open public indelicacy, and as she never hesitated to speak her mind, it can be easily imagined that Miss Chudleigh heard some very candid criticism. One may be sure, however, that the latter could take care of herself in a verbal encounter, and that her ladyship got as good as she gave. Certainly she was very vulnerable. One of her various lovers was the Hon. Henry Conway, but with the usual fate of the lady, they quarrelled, and we have Walpole congratulating his "dear Henry" on his luck in his escape.

Another bantering letter to Conway is further evidence of Lady Caroline's readiness to fall into a rage. "Shall I tell you one more idle story," he writes, "and will you just recollect that you once concerned yourself enough about the heroine of it to excuse my repeating such a piece of tittle-tattle? This heroine is Lady Caroline Petersham, the hero is—not entirely royal blood; at least I have never heard that Lodomie, the tooth-drawer, was in any manner descended from the House of Bourbon. Don't be alarmed: this plebeian operator is not in the catalogue of your successors. How the lady was the aggressor is not known; 'tis only conjectured that French politeness and French interestedness could never have gone such lengths without mighty provocation. The first instance of the tooth-drawer's ungentle behaviour was on hearing it said that Lady Caroline Petersham was

to have her four girls drawn by Listar, which was wondered at, as his price is so great. 'Oh,' said Lodomie, 'Chacun paie pour la sienne.' Soon after this insult there was some dispute about payments and tooth-powder, and divers messages passed. At last the lady wrote a card to say she did not understand such impertinent answers being given to her chairman by an *arracheur de dents*. The angry little gentleman, with as much intrepidity as if he had drawn out all her teeth, tore the card in five slits, and returned it with this astonishing sentence: 'I return you your impertinent card, and desire you will pay me what you owe me.' All I know more is that the tooth-drawer still lives; and so do many lords and gentlemen, formerly thought the slaves of the offended fair one's will and passions, and amongst others, to his great shame, your sincere friend, Horace Walpole."

Another instance of Walpole's zeal in keeping Conway posted up in all the latest gossip concerning his old flame is too characteristic an example of the wit's neat way of putting things to be left out. "Have you heard of a Countess Chamfelt, a Bohemian, rich and hideous, who is arrived here, and is under the protection of Lady Caroline Petersham? She has a great facility at languages, and has already learned 'Damn you' and 'kiss me'—I beg her pardon, I believe she never uses the former but upon the mis-carriage of the latter. In short, as Dodington says, she has had the honour of performing at most Courts in Europe."

CHAPTER XII

Elizabeth at Tunbridge Wells with the Duke of Kingston—Scandal at Windsor—The duke discards his mistress, Madame de la Touche—His grace's new passion—Tunbridge Wells and Beau Nash—Lady Townshend's temper and wit—Her husband's gallantries—The "Tunbridge battles"—Lady Townshend and Kitty Edwin—Elizabeth purchases land in Hill Street, Mayfair—A "tragedy-comedy" at the opera—Miss Chudleigh in hysterics—The Countess of Coventry and Miss Chudleigh—Rival minuet dancers—1752-4.

WHILE Lady Coventry, Lady Caroline Peter-
sham, and other ladies of the Court were
flaunting in Paris in the summer of 1752, Miss Chud-
leigh went to Tunbridge Wells, always a favourite
resort of hers. This particular visit may, however,
have had a motive other than that of a change for
mere health's sake. Lady Jane Coke, in one of her
letters, gives a forecast of this motive. Writing the
previous year while at Windsor, she says: "Miss
Chudleigh is still a nominal maid of honour; she
was here near a fortnight, and the Duke of Kingston
with her, and happened to be taken ill, when he sat up
all night with her, and the apothecary of this town.
We can talk at Windsor, as well as at Derby, therefore
you may be sure we were not silent on such an
occasion."

Scandal, therefore, had already connected the two names. It would seem that Miss Chudleigh, though "nominally" a maid of honour, had practically her freedom, and was only required to attend upon the Princess Augusta when "commanded." There is no doubt that the Princess was very much attached to Elizabeth, and gave her privileges of which she made full use. Mrs. Chudleigh being housekeeper at Windsor Castle, Elizabeth naturally would visit her, and the Duke of Kingston was probably not sorry to avail himself of the opportunities these visits offered to fan the flame of love which had sprung up in his amorous breast. One can readily believe that, in consequence, tongues "were not silent."

It so chanced that when Miss Chudleigh went to Tunbridge Wells the following year Lady Mary Coke was staying there, and, bearing in mind her recollections of the Windsor scandal, it is not surprising to find the gossiping lady sending, with much relish, to her friend Mrs. Eyre an item of interesting news concerning Elizabeth. "I suppose," she says, "you'll expect some account [news] of Tunbridge. It used to afford abundance, but this season has not produced even a lampoon, no beauties, and the Act of Parliament that has put a stop to publick gaming prevents a great many young men coming. Poor Nash has had a fit, though he does not seem to mind it, but he looks just a guy. Miss Chudleigh was there a fortnight, so altered I was surprised to see her by daylight. Lady Ann Hamilton was with her, who since the smallpox has no remains of her beauty but in her own opinion. The Duke of K. [Kingston] was always

with them. That is a surprising affair ; we are so used at Windsor to them coming together there to her mother, who is housekeeper, that now 'tis scarce mentioned."

For some years the duke had been attached to Madame de la Touche, a French lady, and natural daughter of Bernard, a well-known Paris banker. The Duke of Kingston fell madly in love with her, fled with her to England, leading to proceedings being commenced before the French Parliament for the abduction, but the action was put a stop to by Louis. The love-affair began in 1737. The young duke's arrival in England with his conquest set tongues wagging, and Lord Bathurst, writing to Swift, declared emphatically, "I want no foreign commodities. My neighbour the Duke of Kingston has imported one, but I do not think it worth the carriage." For nearly fifteen years the duke remained fairly loyal to the lady, despite the rumours which were spread from time to time that his grace contemplated taking a wife. To judge from a passage in a letter of his relative, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, however, the duke occasionally allowed his fancy to rove in other directions. "I pity —— if the Duke of Kingston marries," Lady Mary writes. "She will then know that her mean compliances will appear as despicable to him as they do now to other people. Who would have thought that all her nice notions and pious meditations would end in being the humble companion of Madame de la Touche ?"

When the duke was smitten by the charms of Elizabeth Chudleigh Madame de la Touche was con-

siderably past her first youth, and the duke's passion was waning. How far Elizabeth had advanced in her relations with the duke at the time the two were together at Tunbridge Wells cannot of course be stated. Elizabeth never gossiped about her own affairs, probably thinking there were plenty of people to save her the trouble, but from Lady Jane Coke's reference to "poor Madame de la Touche" it would seem that the duke's attentions to his new love were becoming very pronounced.

Lady Jane Coke, at all events, does not allege that there was anything "serious" in the marked attention his Grace of Kingston was beginning to pay to the lively maid of honour. In one of her letters written in 1752 she says: "Poor Madame la Touche is, I think, to be pitied; she must suffer extremely. The newspapers marry the Duke to Lady Juliana Collyer, but I hear there is not the least foundation for the report, and the town says he is rather engaged in a flirtation than a matrimonial affair." Elizabeth Chudleigh is no doubt alluded to here, and possibly at this time the duke himself regarded his philandering after her as a mere flirtation.

The "poor Nash" mentioned by Lady Mary Coke was the celebrated Beau Nash, who ruled the fashionable visitors at Tunbridge in a courtly, autocratic way, to which the belles and the beaux docilely submitted. Tunbridge Wells was very popular with the Princess Augusta, and in 1739 she and Prince Frederick visited the place and stayed a considerable time. This led to its becoming a fashionable resort, although for quite a century before, after Lord North discovered the curative

value of its springs, it had been well patronised by valetudinarians. It was when the "quality" began to congregate for amusement, gambling, and frivolity generally that Nash was tempted from Bath and took up his residence at the Wells, where he founded a code of laws for its government. This most favoured of "ladies' men" was not allowed, however, to take the government of affairs without a struggle. When he arrived he found a rival in possession in the shape of a big woman named Bell Causey, who presided as absolute governess at the Wells for a period from 1725 to 1734, and directed the company in all their pleasures and amusements. Bell Causey, however, died soon after Nash's advent, and henceforth he reigned alone. Of Nash it is said that at Bath his equipage was sumptuous, that he usually travelled in a post-chariot and six greys, with outriders, footmen, French horns, and every other appendage of expensive parade; but when he was at Tunbridge Wells he had fallen considerably from his high estate. Fanny Murray, the "Awake, my Fanny," of the "Essay on Woman" and the mistress of Jack Spencer, became the *chère amie* of Beau Nash after Spencer's death in 1746.

The number of notabilities who visited the Wells during the last half of the eighteenth century was remarkable. Under the boughs of an old thorn-tree on the Parade, which has been cut down many years, beauties reclined, flirted, and exchanged persiflage with their cavaliers, while on the Pantiles they flaunted in prodigious hooped petticoats, paint, and powder, and later on in the century with hair built into mountain-

ous structures, difficult nowadays to realise had not artists and caricaturists left on record ample evidence of the madness of fashion during the first fifteen years of the reign of "Farmer George."

Tunbridge Wells at this time rivalled Bath both in gaiety and popularity. We read that : "People of the greatest title, rank, and dignity, people of every learned profession, of every religious and political persuasion ; people of every degree, condition, and occupation of life (if well-dressed and well-behaved), meet amicably here together ; some for the benefit of the water and air, some for a little relaxation from study and business, and others for the pleasures of social and polished life.

"And really, the appearance of the company when assembled together is quite beautiful and noble in the daytime, moving along the parade, like a walking parterre, and at night, in the rooms, like a galaxy of stars in a bright nocturnal sky. The morning is passed in an undress ; in drinking the water, in private and public breakfastings, which are sometimes given by one of the company, in attending prayers at the chapel, in social converse on the parade, at the coffee-house, in the public rooms, or booksellers' shops ; billiards, cotillion dances, private concerts, cards, or sometimes adventitious and extraordinary curiosity and novelty ; a painter, a musician, a juggler, a fire-eater, or a philosopher, etc.

"After dinner all go dressed to the parade again, and the rooms, to tea, in private parties or in public. The ball nights are Tuesdays and Fridays, and assemblies and cards every other night except Sundays.

While the company are walking on the parade a band of music plays to them from the orchestra, twice in the morning, before and after prayers, and once again in the evening, unless it be a ball night. A few minutes are spent by some in making verses, as the waters, or genius of the place, or as love and leisure inspire. These verses (*jeux d'esprits*) are various and occasional, but chiefly complimentary to the ladies in general, or to some particular fair one. A copy of them is usually left at the bookseller's shop, and entered in a book there for inspection and entertainment of the company. This poetical pastime, when confined within the bounds of decorum and politeness, is very pleasing and agreeable, and is always supposed to be exempt of criticism."

Elizabeth's pleasant holiday at Tunbridge Wells over, she returned to London with the Duke of Kingston dangling at her heels, to find the town still agog with the doings of the Gunnings, a little variety in the way of piquant gossip being furnished by the obstreperous Lady Caroline Petersham and her lively friend, little Miss Ashe. For the time being the frivolities of these fair dames provided ample material for the diarists and polite letter-writers. The wrangles of Lady Caroline always made a dainty dish of scandal, and we learn that she and "Pollard" Ashe quarrelled about reputations, while a little later she has her "anniversary quarrel with Lady Townshend."

In Lady Townshend Lady Caroline found a congenial companion. The former was as notorious for her gallantries as the latter, and, remembering this, the extraordinary thing is that the pious and strait-

laced Methodistical Lady Huntingdon, Mrs. Montagu's "well-meaning fanatic," the patroness of George Whitefield, and the founder of the Huntingdonians, should have had so great a friendship for her. Lady Townshend's maiden name was Etheldreda (or, as she preferred to call herself, Audrey) Harrison ; she was the daughter and sole heiress of Edward Harrison, of Balls, Hertfordshire, and she had a reputation as a wit. Walpole calls her "the beautiful Statira," and says, "Wit and beauty remain in the persons of Lady Townshend and Lady Caroline Fitzroy (Petersham)." Lady Townshend was married to Charles Viscount Townshend, from whom she separated, and was the mother of George, the first Marquess Townshend, and of his still more celebrated brother, the right honourable Charles Townshend, orator and statesman. The specimen of Lady Townshend's "wit" given by Jesse does not strike one as remarkably brilliant. Speaking of the two well-known Sir Thomas Robinsons, of whom the one was tall and thin, the other short and fat, she remarked : "I can't imagine why the one should be preferred to the other. I see but little difference between them ; the one is as broad as the other is long." Walpole gives a slightly better sample. "Here is another *bon mot* of my Lady Townshend. We were talking of Methodists. Somebody said, 'Pray, madam, is it true that Whitefield has recanted?' 'No, sir, he has only canted.'"

Elizabeth Montagu records some of Lady Townshend's lively sallies. "I have heard," she writes, "a *bon mot* of Lady Townshend of which none will deny

the truth. Somebody expressed their surprise that Lady Newcastle should be made lady of the bed-chamber. Said she : ‘ Nothing could be more proper. The Queen does not understand English, and could anything be more necessary than that she should learn the *vulgar tongue* ? ’ ” On another occasion, soon after George III. came to the throne, Mrs. Montagu wrote, in a spirit of sarcasm : “ You will find few commoners in England. We make nobility as fast as people make kings and queens on twelfth night, and almost as many. Lady Townshend says she dare not spit out of her window for fear of spitting on a lord.” Lady Townshend was not without rivals in her own field. Mrs. Montagu notes that “ Lady Abercorn and Lady Townshend, each determining to have the most wit of any person in the company, always chose different parties and different ends of the room.”

Lady Caroline Petersham’s hot temper was as much talked about as her love-affairs. They are what one might expect from a descendant of the warm-blooded Barbara Palmer, the Merry Monarch’s Lady Castlemaine. Both in regard to temper and amorous inclination Lady Townshend ran her friend very close. Lady Montagu chronicles the item that “ Lord Townshend is spitting up his lungs at the Gravel-pits, and his charming lady diverting herself with daily rambles in town. She has made a new friendship which is very delightful : I mean with Madame Pulteney, and they hunt in couples from tea-drinking till midnight.”

This was before Lady Townshend’s separation from her husband, who, it is to be noted, was no more

steadfast to his conjugal vows than was the lady. Tunbridge Wells was set by the ears over a matrimonial squabble between the two, in which a certain Mrs. Edwin, upon whom his lordship had cast amorous eyes, was concerned. Lady Hertford, in a letter to the Countess of Pomfret, alludes thus to the "Tunbridge battles": "I dare say you have heard from people who are better informed than I am of the quarrels which have taken place at Tunbridge, and which, I am told, have occasioned some very scandalous lampoons. The people concerned in them were my Lady Townshend and Mrs. Edwin."

Later on we get a piquant bit of gossip relating to the same fascinating lady who so troubled the peace of mind of my Lady Townshend. "Kitty Edwin has been the companion of his [Lord Townshend's] pleasures there [Bath]. The alliance seems firmer between them than at Tunbridge Wells, which served for the entertainment of the public. . . . It is certain Lady Townshend came into the great room gently behind her friend, and, tapping her with her fan, said aloud: "I know where, how, and when." These mysterious words drew the attention of all the company, and had such an effect upon poor Kitty she was carried to her lodgings in strong hysterics. However, by the intercession of prudent mediators, peace was concluded, whereupon Lady Mary Wortley Montagu lays down this instructive moral: "If the conduct of the heroines was considered in a true light, perhaps it might serve for an example even to higher powers, by showing that the surest method to obtain a lasting and honourable peace is to begin with a vigorous war."

Lady Townshend once had a disagreeable experience. She was arrested in the streets at the suit of a house-painter whose bill she refused to pay in consequence of its being double the amount of the estimate he had sent in to her. Her ladyship was not one to put up tamely with an insult. She had the attorney who had given the order for her arrest brought before the bar of the House of Lords for seizing the person of a peeress in her own right; but after a severe reprimand the lawyer was dismissed on making a humble submission and paying the customary fees. Lady Townshend died in 1788, and was the supposed original of the frolicsome Lady Bellaston in "Tom Jones" and of Lady Tempest in "Pompey the Little," and if the assertion be true this side of her character may well be left in the pages of Fielding.

From the evidence put before the Ecclesiastical Court fifteen years later it would seem to be pretty clear that at this time, while the Coventrys, the Peter-shams, the Townshends, and other ladies of pleasure were spending money, Elizabeth Chudleigh was saving, and the fact that her worldly circumstances began to improve after her close acquaintance with the Duke of Kingston is not without significance. In the year 1753 she began to acquire landed property, and, to quote the legal jargon as it is set forth in the "jactitation" proceedings (of which more anon), she instituted to annul her marriage, we read that the "said Elizabeth Chudleigh, in her own name as spinster, and without any interposition, let, or hindrance of the said Hon. John Augustus Hervey or his being a party thereto or any ways concerned therein, took a lease (it was

for eighty-one years) of the right hon. Lord Berkley of Stratton of certain land in Hill Street in the parish of St. George, Hanover Square, in the county of Middlesex, wherein the said Elizabeth Chudleigh caused to be built a house wherein she continued to live for the space of five years and upwards, and afterwards sold the same to Hugo Meynell, Esq., and received the money proceeding from the sale thereto to her own use."

Land in the fashionable neighbourhood of Mayfair was costly even in the middle of the eighteenth century, and when, in addition, Elizabeth Chudleigh went to the expense of building a house where she afterwards lived in style it is very clear she had something else to depend upon other than her salary as a maid of honour. How did she accumulate wealth if not by the presents she received from her admirers? On this point, perhaps, it is superfluous to speculate, but the fact remains that during her twelve years' separation from Captain Hervey she displayed a style of living infinitely superior to her known income, which was only £600 a year.

Later on she bought more property, and, again to quote from the jactitation proceedings, she in 1757 was "admitted a copyholder and tenant of the dean and chapter of Westminster for the house and land or some part thereto wherein she now lives at Knightsbridge in the county of Middlesex in her own then and now maiden name of Elizabeth Chudleigh, and without any interposition, let or hindrance of the said right hon. John Augustus Hervey." Again in 1762 she took from Mr. John Butcher, in her own maiden

name, a lease of certain lands in Kensington, also "without let or hindrance on the part of her husband." About the last-named enterprise there is no need to speculate. By this time her relations with the Duke of Kingston were open and notorious, and, as he was rich, generous, and not very strong-minded, the masterful lady had probably no difficulty in procuring any money she wanted.

One may give a shrewd guess that Elizabeth did not have to wait until her liaison with the duke was recognised before she was permitted access to his purse. Dates, when affairs of gallantry are concerned, are necessarily difficult to fix. Amorous couples are not particularly anxious to take the world into their confidence, and the approximate period when Elizabeth Chudleigh gained complete ascendancy over the infatuated nobleman is, of course, one of mere conjecture. It is, however, fair to assume that the lady's comparative quietude during the years 1753 and 1754 was due to the fact that she considered it politic to be circumspect in her conduct. She had lost one duke, through no fault of her own it may be admitted, and we may be sure she would run no risk of letting a second one slip through her fingers. Hence she refrained from "frizellation," and indulged in no daring escapades similar to the never-to-be-forgotten one at the Jubilee masquerade. Still, on one occasion she distinguished herself after her fashion, as Walpole duly records. Writing to John Chute, he says: "The only event since you left London was the tragic comedy that was enacted last Saturday at the Opera. One of the dramatic guards fell flat on his face and motionless

in an apoplectic fit. The Princess and her children were there. Miss Chudleigh, who apparently had never seen a man fall on his face before, went into the most theatrical fit of kicking and shrieking that ever was seen. Several other women who were preparing their fits were so distanced that she had the whole house to herself; and, indeed, such a confusion for half an hour I never saw. The next day, at my Lady Townshend's, old Charles Stanhope asked what these fits were called. Charles Townshend replied: 'The true convulsive fits, to be had only of the maker.'

At this time, then, the chroniclers were more concerned with stories affecting my Lady Coventry, otherwise the beautiful and shallow-brained Maria Gunning, than with Elizabeth Chudleigh, occupied, as the latter was, in quietly keeping her duke constant and in a good humour. Walpole, as usual, is not slow to retail everything that concerns the countess. "I shall tell you an historiette of our beauty, my Lady Coventry. I was lately at a private ball with her at George Pitt's. We supped in the library, and, sitting near the books, Mr. Churchill took down a Bible, and said: 'Who can tell me which is first—Solomon's Song, or his Wisdom?' You will not think that there was much brimstone in this speech. However, the fair countess put herself (I say, 'put herself,' for you never saw anything more done on purpose) into an outrageous passion, said it was blasphemous and impious, and she wished the house would fall upon his head. This set us all into violent laughing. She called out: 'My Lord Coventry, if

you laugh any more, *I will cry.*' She then would have risen from the table; nobody would stir. At last we went into the ball-room. My lord stood with his back to the chimney-glass; she stood before him, scolding immoderately, and at the same time seeing herself in the glass over his shoulder. Lord Holderness came up to her and said: 'Well, madam, as you have quarrelled with my lord, I hope you will let me be your paramour to-night.' 'Yes,' said she, 'with all my heart; and I will be your Thisbis.' I was so entertained with all this folly, to call it nothing else, that I was determined it should not end so, but begged all the women to take my lord out and make him dance so continually that the quarrel might not be made up when they went home. The idea took like wild-fire: the women were so delighted with the thought of depriving the countess of that night's perquisites of her beauty that they made the earl dance till he and themselves were ready to faint, and till, I believe, my lady wished that she had interested herself a little less about Solomon's understanding, which was not the point in which she really wished her wise lord should resemble him."

There are not wanting allusions which would seem that the beautiful countess had supplanted Elizabeth Chudleigh in the favour of the King. We read that on March 2nd, 1754, "Lord Holderness made a magnificent ball for these foreigners last week. There were a hundred and forty people, and most stayed supper. Two of my Frenchmen learnt country dances, and succeeded very well. T'other night they danced minuets for the entertainment of the King at the

masquerade, and then he sent for Lady Coventry to dance. It was quite like Herodias ; and I believe if he had offered her a boon she would have chosen the head of St. John. I believe I told you of her passion for the young Lord Bolingbroke." Thus the inveterate tattler of Strawberry Hill. But Lady Coventry was not the only dancer, for on the birthday of the King, as Lady Mary Coke records, "there was more finery than usual, and Miss Chudleigh danced minuets." Lady Mary Coke, who dearly loves to write about the fashions, adds: "It is not the least likely that hoop-petticoats will be left off, since nobody (except Lady Dysart) goes without them but in a morning."

The minuet was a very important and elaborate business, about the only thing amid the general frivolity that could really be called serious. The greatest possible attention was paid to every detail, and the dancers were subjected to the closest scrutiny and criticism. Any little slip was at once noticed, and the ladies consequently vied with each other in acquiring perfection. In "The Rudiments of Genteel Behaviour" elaborate instructions are given how to dance the minuet, the crucial test apparently being the deportment of the hands. To give one hand properly the pupil is told that: "The body must rest on the left Foot light and graceful, the Head must be turn'd free, and the eyes look over the right wrist at the Partner, the Shoulders remaining easy, the Arm bending a little Circular and at the same distance from the Body, as by this figure in Proportion, is expressed ; for if the Hand be near the Body, the Elbow will project out Sharp

and the Wrist appear lame ; the Fingers must not be closed nor too far separated, the Forefinger and Thumb (tho' near each other) must not join, nor the little finger point out as if it had no Joints ; the Arm must not Swing, nor the Wrist have a twisting Motion, but the Hand rising from the Petticoat, with graceful ease, must appear as you observe in this figure, then give the Hand, and on withdrawing it bend the Arm as before and let it fall easy as it was raised, and in the Time that falls raise the other in like Manner."

In giving both hands "the Arms must not come suddenly to that Attitude, but with easy, graceful Motion without Stopping ; this Figure shews how high the Arms must rise before the Hands turn to the Hands of the Partner ; the Circular Action of both Arms is an Expression of Civility till the Hands are turn'd into those of the Partner ; let the Looks and Actions, during the Dance, be wholly address'd to the Partner ; keep Time in an easy Motion ; avoid being too near the Partner in the Dance, but finish it without hurry ; paying the usual Respects to the Company and the Partner, and parting in an easy, obliging Manner, which will please more than the Dance itself ; on the contrary, if the Dance be finish'd, and the Parting made in a hasty, careless Manner, it will Merit Censure rather than Applause."

Elizabeth Chudleigh, although not of stately presence, would seem to have been proficient in this most courtly of dances, since her performance was generally singled out as a feature of a ball or rout worthy of mention. Later on, when she and the Duke of Kingston were

openly associated, she went with him to Newark Races, which lasted three days, each day winding up with a ball, one of which, Mr. Thoroton, secretary of the Duke of Rutland, her neighbour at Knightsbridge, is recorded as having opened by "dancing a minuet with Miss Chudleigh."

CHAPTER XIII

The mystery and romance of the pretty Quakeress—Prince George's alleged love for Hannah Lightfoot—The story of the abduction of Hannah, and of her supposed secret marriage with the Prince—An inquiry instituted by the Society of Friends—The mystery remains unsolved—Prince George and Prince Edward's knowledge of the world—Elizabeth Chudleigh's share in the romance—1754-6.

IN the midst of the general giddiness and frivolity of the court circle at this period, the thoughts of many of its members must now and again have turned soberly to the shy, reserved, "godly-minded" lad of fifteen, who was now Prince George of Wales, and who, if alive at the time of his grandfather's decease, would ascend the throne of England.

George did not figure much in the gaiety ; it was not to his taste. His disposition, according to his biographers, was such that the skittishness of the maids of honour would more likely repel than attract him. Notwithstanding this, a certain romantic story hovered about him for some years. If there be any truth in it, he must, in this year 1754, have been making furious love to a pretty Quakeress, eight years older than himself, and not only making love, but actually planning an abduction with the assistance of

Miss Chudleigh! Nor was this the end of the story. We are asked to believe that he married the pretty Quakeress, and that practically he committed bigamy when he went through the marriage ceremony with the Princess Charlotte of Mechlenburg-Strelitz, and, finally, that he had three children, of which the pretty Quakeress was the mother. The story is incredible on the face of it, yet for something like three-quarters of a century there were hosts of people who, if they did not believe the whole of the story, were disposed to think there was "something in it."

Excepting for the assertion that Elizabeth Chudleigh was, if not the prime mover in the affair, at least the willing and useful instrument, this extraordinary story would not find a place in these pages; but, as the matter stands, it cannot be passed over. Although the date of the abduction and marriage is fixed in 1754, the affair appears to have been kept a profound secret for twenty-two years, when, as Mr. W. B. Boulton, author of "In the Days of the Georges," tells us, the first number of *The Citizen* was published. This being a new paper, a bait of some kind was necessary to attract attention. What better attraction could be offered than something which promised to be spicy concerning royalty? Accordingly we read the following announcement:

"Court Fragments, which will be published by *The Citizen* for the Use, Instruction, and Amusement of Royal Infants and Young Promising Noblemen.

"(1) The flirting and Adventures of Miss L—htf—t, the fair Quaker; wherein will be faithfully portrayed some striking pictures of female constancy and princely

gratitude, which terminated in the untimely death of that young lady, and the sudden death of a disconsolate Mother."

Three years after, in the pages of *The Royal Register*, edited by William Combe, whose dull book, "The Tours of Dr. Syntax," still commands a price because of Rowlandson's illustrations, the story, or a suggestion of the story, is considered good enough to revive. *The Register* observes: "It is not believed, even at this time, by many persons who live in the world, that he [King George] had a mistress previous to his marriage. Such a circumstance was reported by many, believed by some, disputed by others, but proved by none; and with such a suitable caution was this intrigue conducted that, if the body of the people called Quakers, of which the young lady in question was a member, had not divulged the fact by the public proceedings of their meeting concerning it, it would, in all probability, have remained a matter of doubt to this day."

The ball, once set rolling, went merrily along, receiving a vigorous kick from Sir Nathaniel Wraxall, who wrote in his "Historical Memoirs": "Stories were indeed generally circulated of his [Prince George's] attachment to a young woman, a Quaker, about this time of his life, just as scandal many years afterwards whispered that he distinguished Lady Bridget Tollemache by his particular attentions. The former report was probably well founded, and the latter assertion was unquestionably true; but those persons who have enjoyed most opportunities for studying the King's character will most incline to

believe that in neither instance did he pass the limits of innocent gallantry or occasional familiarity."

Mrs. Piozzi, in her positive way, had no hesitation in making up her mind on the subject, and roundly asserted that Hannah Lightfoot's son by King George was still alive. On the other hand, Mr. Thoms, who investigated the story of Hannah Lightfoot, asserted that there was strong reason for doubting whether such a woman ever existed. Here Mr. Thoms was wrong. Undoubtedly there was a Hannah Lightfoot, but whether she was the heroine of a royal romance is another matter. Anyhow, it took thirty-nine years to evolve the full story, for not until 1815, in *The Monthly Magazine* for April, do we get anything like a connected narrative. The "Miss L—htf—t" mentioned in *The Citizen* now stands revealed as Hannah Lightfoot. "She lived," writes the correspondent of *The Monthly Magazine*, "with her father and mother at the corner of St. James's Market, who kept a shop there (I believe linen-draper's). The Prince had often noticed her on his way from Leicester House to St. James's, and was struck with her person. Miss Chudleigh, the late Duchess of Kingston, became his agent. The royal lover's relations took alarm, and sent to enquire for a young man to marry her." This pressing need, it appears, was supplied in the person of one Isaac Oxford, who was shopman to Barton the grocer, on Ludgate Hill, and who used to chat with her when she came to the shop to buy groceries. A Mr. Penryn, of Knightsbridge, it was said, furnished a place of meeting for the lovers. An agent of Miss Chudleigh



GEORGE, PRINCE OF WALES (AT THE AGE OF 13)



PRINCE EDWARD, DUKE OF YORK (AT THE AGE OF 12)

called on Oxford and proposed that, on his marrying Hannah, he should have a considerable sum of money. Hannah stayed for a short time with her husband, and Isaac never saw her more, but he learned that she had gone with Miss Chudleigh. He was a poor-hearted fellow, for, by making a bustle about it, he might, perhaps, have secured himself a good provision. He told me, when I last saw him, that he had presented a petition at St. James's, which was not attended to, also that he had received some money from Penryn's assignees on account of his wife.

"Isaac lived many years as a respectable grocer at Warminster, his native place, but retired from business before his death, which took place about five years ago, in the eighty-sixth year of his age.

"Many years after Hannah was taken away her husband, believing her to be dead, was married again to a Miss Bartlett, of Heevil, North Wilts, and by her succeeded to an estate at Clevrell of about £150 a year. On the report reviving, a few years since, of his first wife being still living, a Mr. Bartlett, first cousin to Isaac's second wife, claimed the estate on the plea of the invalidity of this second marriage.

"It is said that the late Marquis of Bath, a little before his death, reported that she was then living, and the same has been asserted by other gentlemen of this neighbourhood.

"Hannah was fair and pure, as far as I have ever heard, but, report says, not the purest of the pure, in respect of the house of Mr. Penryn, who left her an annuity of £40 a year. She was, indeed, con-

sidered one of the beautiful women of her time, and rather disposed to *embonpoint*."

There is no need here to follow the intricate windings of the story. Mr. W. B. Boulton has industriously plodded through the highways and byways of this marvellous piece of "secret history," and brought the narrative to the controversy between Mr. J. H. Jesse, author of the "History of the Court of George the Third," and Mr. Thoms, the well known founder of *Notes and Queries*. Mr. Jesse was an enthusiastic supporter of the truth of the story and not only ferreted out a certificate of Hannah's birth, but also the certificate of her marriage of Isaac Oxford, which ran as follows :

"This is to certify that in the registers of marriage solemnised at Mayfair Chapel, which registers are preserved in the vestry of St. George's Parish, Hanover Square, there appears, under date of 11th of December 1753, the following entry : Isaac Oxford, of St Martin's, Ludgate, and Hannah Lightfoot, of St James's, Westminster. As witness my hand this 11th day of June, one thousand eight hundred and sixty-seven. JAMES MACREDY, curate of St. George Hanover Square." The name "Oxford," it is to be noted, is given everywhere else as "Axford."

Mr. Thoms' inquiries led him to the unearthing of a valuable document in the shape of the minutes of various meetings held in 1755 and 1756 by the Society of Friends at Westminster, convened to inquire into the conduct of Hannah Lightfoot. These minutes have since been photographed, and can be seen by the curious in the library of the British

Museum. The gist of the entries is that it had been reported to the Friends that Hannah had broken the rules of their order by marrying one not of their Society, by allowing herself to be married by a "priest"—in other words, by a clergyman of the Church of England. The offence was magnified by the rumour that she had run away from her husband, and a committee was appointed to make inquiries. This was early in 1755. The result of the committee's labours was the information that Hannah was married in 1754, that she had "gone away," but that "her mother was not fully satisfied that she was separated from her husband." On this the committee was instructed to "acquaint her" (Hannah) "that this meeting intends to give forth a testimony of denial against her." Again the committee went out in search of the missing Hannah, and again they reported at a meeting held in "the first month 1756 that she could not be found." Several other meetings were held, but information concerning the errant lady was not forthcoming. All that the committee could establish was that, according to the register of birth, Hannah Lightfoot was born in the twelfth month of 1730, and was the daughter of Matthew and Mary Lightfoot, Wapping.

Apparently convinced that Hannah Lightfoot was not worth further trouble, the Society of Friends at their monthly meeting for Westminster "held at the Savoy on the 3rd of the 3rd month 1756," proceeded to pass sentence of excommunication. It ran thus :

"A testimony of Denial against Hannah Lightfoot was brought in pursuant to the Directors of Last

Meeting which was read and approv'd, and is as follows (viz):

“Whereas Hannah Lightfoot, a Person Educated under our profession and who for several years past resided within the Compass of this Meeting, did then Enter into a State of Marriage by the Priest with one not of our Society which is directly and opugnant to the good Rules and orders well known to the Established amongst us ; on which this Meeting appointed Friends to visit her, who Several endeavoured to find where she was in order to speak with her. But to no Purpose nor could they obtain any Intelligence where she is. We therefore being desirous (as much as in us lies) to clear the truth which we Profess and our Selves from any aspersions which through the misconduct of the said Hannah Lightfoot may be cast upon friends do hereby testify against such her Proseedings as aforesaid and disown her for the same as one with whom we can have no fellowship untill from a penitent Mind and true Contrition of heart she shall be induced to Signifie her unfeigned Sorrow for her offence and that this may be her case is what we truly desire. Nathaniel Might or John Easterman is desired to carry a Copy hereof to the next Six weeks Meeting.”

This inquiry stimulates rather than allays curiosity. Mrs. Lightfoot either could not or would not give any information ; the committee do not appear to have cared about knowing the name of Hannah's husband—perhaps, being outside the pale of the Society of Friends, they took no interest in him ; but at least they might have specified the particular church where the marriage was solemnised, and it would surely not have been

superfluous had the address of Mrs. Lightfoot been given, especially as the year when Hannah was born and the place of her birth—Wapping—were deemed worthy of notice.

It was a far cry from Wapping to Mayfair in those days, and one wonders how Hannah Lightfoot came to be residing in the latter locality. Mr. Jesse, however, gives an explanation. The maiden name of Hannah's mother was Wheeler. Hannah had a natural uncle, Henry Wheeler, who carried on business in Market Street, St. James's, at whose house she and her mother frequently resided; and here it was, according to the story, the young Prince saw her and fell in love with her.

Much has been made of the unlikelihood of a lad so strictly brought up as Prince George indulging in an intrigue. It is well known that, throughout his boyhood and youth, and even in his early manhood, George III. lived a very quiet and secluded life; how quiet and how secluded may be gathered from Sir N. W. Wraxall, "Memoirs of his Own Time," who writes: "During near ten years which elapsed between the death of his father, early in 1751, and the decease of his grandfather, a period when the human mind is susceptible of such deep impressions, he remained in a state of almost absolute seclusion from his future people and from the world. Constantly resident at Leicester House or at Carlton House when he was in London, immured at Kew whenever he went to the country, perpetually under the eye of his mother and of Lord Bute, who acted in the choicest unity of design, he saw comparatively few other persons, and those only

chosen individuals of both sexes. They naturally obtained, and long preserved, a very firm ascendancy over him. When he ascended the throne, though already arrived at manhood, his very person was hardly known, and his character was still less understood, beyond a narrow circle. Precautions, it is well ascertained, were even adopted by the Princess Dowager to preclude as much as possible access to him, precautions which, to the extent of her ability, were redoubled after he became King. It will scarcely be believed, but it is nevertheless true, that in order to prevent him from conversing with any persons, or receiving written intimations, anonymous or otherwise, between the drawing-room and the door of Carlton House, when he was returning from thence to St. James's or Buckingham House, after his evening visits to his mother, she never failed to accompany him till he got into his sedan chair."

His grandfather, King George, declared that the boy was fit for nothing but to read the Bible to his mother; the young Prince's favourite pastor was the pious Dr. Doddridge, many of whose hymns he learnt by heart. In fact he was entirely the opposite of his brother Edward, apropos of whose budding tastes and of George's *naïveté* Walpole tells a story which is worth quoting.

"T'other day as he (Prince George) was with the Prince of Wales, Kitty Fisher passed by, and the child named her. The Prince, to try him, asked who that was. 'Why, a Miss.' 'A Miss?' said the Prince of Wales, 'why, are not all girls Misses?' 'Oh, but a particular sort of a Miss—a Miss that sells

oranges.' 'Is there any harm in selling oranges?' 'Oh, but they are not such oranges as you buy. I believe they are the sort that my brother Edward buys.'"

Was George really so innocent? In Walpole's anecdote he knew what he was talking about, and so also in a story told by Mrs. Piozzi, which suggests that the two Princes had not listened to court scandals for nothing. "Brother, when you and I are grown men," were said to have been the words addressed by the younger (Prince Edward) to the elder Prince, "you shall marry a wife, and I will keep a mistress."

"You had better," interrupted their mother, who was in the apartment, "learn your pronouns, as your preceptor has desired you. I believe you do not know what a pronoun is."

"Be quiet, Eddy," said the King. "We shall have anger presently for your nonsense. Fletcher," (a playmate of the Princes) "give us the books."

"Let them alone," cried Prince Edward. "I know what it is without a book ; a pronoun is to a noun what a mistress is to a wife—a substitute and a representative." The Princess burst out a-laughing and turned them all out of the room."

The argument in respect to the unlikelihood of Prince George following the example of his father and brother has of course considerable weight, but it is not conclusive. Instances have been known of shy lads becoming infatuated with divinities older than themselves, and a pretty Quakeress, with her demure looks and sober dress, might well be to the godly youth's taste. As Mr. Jesse points out, Prince George,

at the time of the supposed marriage in Keith's chapel in 1754, was in his seventeenth year. Still youths, however amorously inclined, do not often plan abductions and marriages, and this possibly was why the name of Elizabeth Chudleigh was dragged in as that of the necessary go-between.

The sole authority for the introduction of Elizabeth Chudleigh's name into the affair rests on the statement of a correspondent of *The Monthly Magazine* for September 1821. The writer says: "Miss Chudleigh (the late Duchess of Kingston) was the agent employed to get Isaac to marry her, with the promise of a small sum of money." One looks in vain for any corroboration of this assertion. None of the contemporary chroniclers of gossip have a word to say on the subject, and even Elizabeth's not over-scrupulous biographers are silent, and we may be sure that, had such a spicy tale concerning her been current at any time between 1754 and 1776, it would have been eagerly appropriated and made much of. One possible theory can be advanced, but of course it rests on supposition only. The theory may be thus stated:

The famous trial for bigamy took place in 1776. The notoriety Elizabeth had already achieved now reached its climax, and, previous to the proceedings in Westminster Hall, when talk of the forthcoming sensation was in everybody's mouth, all manner of catch-penny narratives, more or less fictitious, were printed and published relating to the duchess. Among them was a little book issued in Paris, entitled "*Les Aventures trop amoureuses ou Elizabeth Chudleigh*," mention of which has already been made in these

pages. The book was written in the interests of Madame de la Touche, the discarded mistress of the Duke of Kingston, and Elizabeth's bitter enemy. Might it not be that the projector of *The Citizen* contemplated making some use of the history of the most prominent woman of her time, about whom the public were ready to believe anything, an intention he failed to carry out, as the "Court Fragments" promised did not make its appearance? Be this as it may, Elizabeth Chudleigh, from her association as maid of honour with the young Prince, was a very suitable personage to figure in the circumstantial romance afterwards evolved by the correspondent of *The Monthly Magazine*, and it gave a verisimilitude to the narrative which was enough for the credulous. If the whole business was a concoction, the assertion respecting Elizabeth Chudleigh may, of course, be at once dismissed, but the mystery respecting Hannah Lightfoot remains, at all events, so far as her introduction into the various statements, beginning in 1776 and ending in 1867, are concerned. Why did the projector of *The Citizen* pitch upon her name? Quakers are the most cautious, discreet, and reticent of people, and the Westminster Friends were not likely to chatter about the defection of Hannah and the result of their inquiry. Yet it would look as if some story connected with the girl had oozed out, had been the subject of gossip, and hence was seized upon as a good topic to give a fillip to the sale of *The Citizen*. It has also to be explained how Mr. Piozzi and Wraxall got hold of the story, seeing that the circumstantial account of the alleged abduction

and marriage was not made public until 1821. In all probability an explanation will never be forthcoming, and the legend must be relegated to the long list of unsolved mysteries.

The statements made by the various contributors to the story concerning Hannah are circumstantial enough, but unfortunately corroborative evidence is wanting in every instance. Nothing is certain excepting that, from the time of her quitting her uncle's roof in Market Street, little that can be considered authentic is known concerning her. We are told that a retreat was provided for the lady in one of the large houses, surrounded with a high wall and garden, which used to border what was known half a century ago as Cat and Mutton Fields, on the east side of Hackney Road, and here, it is said, she died. But all is conjecture.

Since this chapter was written Miss Pendered has published the results of her efforts to elucidate the story. In spite of her unbounded industry in following every possible clue, Miss Pendered leaves the mystery exactly where she found it. She fails to put forward the slightest evidence implicating Elizabeth, and consequently her denunciations of Augusta's maid of honour as the *deus ex machina* of the affair are both unjust and superfluous.

CHAPTER XIV

Elizabeth and the Duke of Kingston—She leases a house and land at Knightsbridge—Knightsbridge an almost impassable road infested by highwaymen and footpads—Miss Chudleigh's garden—Her houses at Finchley and at Colnbrook—The rumoured illness of the Earl of Bristol suggests a daring step—Elizabeth's secret visit to Lainston and Winchester—The difficulty of preparing a parish register—How the difficulty was overcome and what became of the register—1756-9.

THE attentions paid by the Duke of Kingston to Elizabeth Chudleigh, which had become manifest both at Windsor and Tunbridge Wells, by degrees reached the stage when their names were coupled together without remark. Society was very indulgent in such matters; a liaison was gossiped about for a short time, and, if not forgotten, accepted. As we have seen, long before 1757 Elizabeth had resources at her disposal far in excess of the limits of her own slender purse, and in that year, as already recorded, she took a lease of the house at Knightsbridge. Land and houses in this district could be had at a very moderate price in those days, but it is hardly likely that Elizabeth would have leased a house so far away from the Court for her own private and individual convenience. It is pretty clear that she sought retirement to escape as far as might be the eye of society and the tongue of

scandal. Knightsbridge in 1780 is described as a village a little to the east of Kensington, with many public-houses and new buildings lately erected, but none of them sufficiently remarkable to admit of particular description. In 1783 a letter describes the place as "quite out of London," and this description is fairly correct, since the Westbourne ran open, the streets were unpaved and unlighted, and a Maypole was still on the village green. The road through Knightsbridge was as bad as any to be found in the outskirts of the metropolis. The Westbourne continually overflowed its banks and for weeks at a time the highway was a filthy quagmire, and allowed to remain so.

Lord Hervey, whose son Augustus was Elizabeth's secret husband, writes: "The road between this place [Kensington] and London is grown so infamously bad that we live here in the same solitude we should do if cast on a rock in the middle of the ocean, and all the Londoners tell us there is between them and us a great impassable gulf of mud. There are two roads through the park, but the new one is so convex and the old one so concave that, by this extreme of faults, they agree in the common one of being, like the high road, impassable." Besides the road where coaches, carriages, and wagons stuck fast and had to remain hours before they could be extricated, there were other dangers to be encountered at Knightsbridge. Gentlemen both on the "High Toby" and "Low Toby" game—in other words, highwaymen and footpads—infested the road, the "Half-way House," a well-known hostelry at Hyde Park Corner, being a favourite rendezvous

The Duke and Elizabeth at Kingston House 245

for such gentry. Most of the innkeepers on the route through Kensington, Hammersmith, and as far as Hounslow, were in league with the knights of the road.

The house purchased at Knightsbridge was, after Elizabeth's marriage with the duke, known as Kingston House, by which name it is still called ; but for a time it was entitled Ennismore House, from the second title of Lord Listowel, the present owner of the property. It is situated at the extreme end of Knightsbridge, opposite Princes Gate, and not far from Exhibition Road. At one time the Marquis of Wellesley, brother of the great Duke of Wellington, lived here.

The urban homes of the great families, the author of the "Life of the Marquis of Granby" points out, afford an apt illustration of the westward flow of the tide of London "residential" life. Receding gradually from the vicinity of the Thames in the City, and creeping along the Strand, that life has moved and removed farther and farther from its former eastern nucleus, devouring like a locust-swarm the green fields and hedges across which its destiny beckoned. Time was when, to go no great distance backward, the owner of Burlington House declared he would tolerate no house farther westward than his own. For a space his whim remained uninterfered with, until Berkeley (now Devonshire) House came into being, and London crept doggedly on past the Green Park to Hyde Park Corner, opposite to which Lanesborough House was called the "country-house" of the peer of that name, though "suburban" would have been more appro-

priate. So, apparently, thought Lord Lanesborough when he had inscribed on its façade :

It is my delight to be
Both in town and country.

But a far bolder leap westward was made by John, third Duke of Rutland, who, at a mile west of the turnpike at Hyde Park Corner, acquired in 1752 a somewhat short lease of the "Well Fields" in Knightsbridge, consisting of seven acres of meadow land. Upon this he built a Georgian residence, which in its turn became known as Rutland House—a house often, at different intervals, brightened by the presence of the Marquis of Granby, John Mostyn, Sir John Ligonier, and frequented by many military, political, and social celebrities of the day—among others the Duke of Newcastle, the Marquis of Rockingham, the Duke of Kingston, the Marchioness of Granby, afterwards known as the Beautiful Duchess of Rutland, and her husband, the fourth Duke.

The estate of which Elizabeth Chudleigh became the owner adjoined the Duke of Rutland's land, and for purposes of comparison with the ground values of Western London now, it may be worth mentioning that the rent paid in 1752 for the seven acres of land round Rutland House was £30 per annum, less land tax, roughly £4 an acre.

"In the British Museum there is a plan of the estate in Knightsbridge formerly belonging to a Mr. Philip Moreau, sold in 1759, consisting of a considerable triangular piece of land having its apex at the point where the Knightsbridge and Brompton Roads diverge.

A watch-house stood at this point, and trees were dotted about from thence to Knightsbridge Green, on which a Maypole remained until 1800. The only portion of the green now left is the small grass-plot railed in near the entrance to Tattersall's. Abutting on the green was the 'Rose and Crown' posting-house, which was pulled down in 1860, after an existence of three hundred years. Between it and Rutland House meadows stretched, and beyond the former Kingston House was later built by the Duke of Kingston, whose reputed wife so much exercised society in Granby's period by her liberal views with regard to marriage, which led her into espousing his grace of Kingston while her real husband, Captain Hervey, was still alive."

"Nearly equidistant between the two houses stood, in the middle of the then disgraceful roadway, the dissipated, rat-bitten looking tavern, already referred to, called the 'Half-way House.' This was an uncomfortable neighbour, as it depended largely for its support on the highwaymen who relieved from dulness the road between Hyde Park Corner and Hounslow Heath. Jerry Abershaw affected it, and on its demolition (about 1850 only!) a secret passage was discovered leading from a room in the western end to the stables, for the use of any one requiring his horse in a hurry."

We have this on the authority of Mr. Walter Evelyn Manners, but it is doubtful whether he is justified in classifying Jerry Abershaw among the highwaymen. Abershaw was a common footpad who, with a congenial spirit named Joe Lorison, better known as

"Jumping Joe," was in the habit of prowling about the Knightsbridge Road on the look-out for unwary and sleepy waggoners. Mr. Lorison, somewhat of an athlete, had acquired great proficiency in the use of his legs, and his favourite method of attack was to spring in the darkness on to the unprepared rustic, who in his fright became a ready prey to his rascality.

Mr. Davis, in his "Memorial of the Hamlet of Knightsbridge," says that Kingston House was built about 1770. He describes it as a large and pleasant mansion, and when first erected attracted notice by the conservatory attached to it. If Mr. Davis's date is correct, the duke must have rebuilt the house after his marriage in 1769, for a house on the site of the present mansion was certainly bought by Elizabeth Chudleigh in 1757, as mentioned in the jactitation proceedings.

It was probably due to one of Elizabeth's erratic moods that she decided to try the delights of a country life. The duke's valet, one Thomas Whitehead, who, as will be seen later on, gives a very circumstantial account of the domestic life of the pair before and after they went through the marriage ceremony together, says that "Miss Chudleigh has as good a garden and as well stocked with fruit and vegetables as any in Knightsbridge, or within ten miles of the place," and no doubt the management of this garden gave full scope for her undoubted business capacity. It may be assumed that by this time she was no longer attached to the Court of the Dowager-Princess save in a nominal sense, as she seems to have lived where she pleased and did pretty much as she liked. If she were in



MARIA, COUNTESS OF COVENTRY

receipt of her salary, as Walpole, writing in 1760, intimates, her relations with the duke were no bar to her retaining her position, anomalous as it must have become, as maid of honour. Whitehead tells us that, soon after the building of the house at Knightsbridge was commenced, she had a villa at Finchley, but that subsequently she took Percy Lodge, near Colnbrook, "for the convenience of receiving the duke's visits more privately till her house was finished at Knightsbridge." If this were so it would seem to support the theory that she was anxious to enjoy her seclusion with the duke at Knightsbridge unmolested by inconvenient callers. Whether this is so or not the fact remains that, between 1757 and 1760, one hears very little about Elizabeth, and no doubt she had plenty to busy herself about in superintending the furnishing of the house and the laying out of the grounds and no longer needed the stimulant of court life and its frivolities to give her occupation and excitement.

This probably was the conclusion her friends came to if they cared to speculate about her motives. No one, certainly, would have suspected the real reason why she absented herself from court circles ; no one would have imagined that the ill-health of John, Earl of Bristol, had any connection with Elizabeth's doings at this time. Yet this was the fact, the explanation of which was that the Earl of Bristol was the brother of the Hon. Augustus Hervey, who was his immediate heir, and the Hon. Augustus Hervey was Elizabeth's husband.

It was a position of affairs totally un contemplated by Elizabeth when in 1744 she consented to become the

wife of the young lieutenant. At that time there were three lives between Augustus Hervey and the earldom, and the possibility of Elizabeth's sailor-husband becoming the Earl of Bristol was very remote. But time had worked in his favour. His grandfather, who was the earl in 1744, was dead, Lord John Hervey, the second son of the earl, had followed him across the bourne, and the present holder of the title had no children.

Elizabeth, as we have already had occasion to point out, never lost sight of the main chance. The one person in the world for whom she had the most concern was herself, and she had a way of providing for a rainy day which certainly did credit to her prudence.

Elizabeth was, of course, perfectly well aware that on the death of his elder brother Augustus Hervey would become Earl of Bristol, and she was not sentimental enough to prefer her equivocal relations with the Duke of Kingston to being an acknowledged countess, even though she might dislike her lawful husband. There was another reason why it was evident that having two strings to her bow might be to her advantage. Although the duke was completely under her influence and although practically his purse was hers, he was not in the best of health. He had had a hot youth, a gay middle age, and he was worn out and surfeited with pleasure. Elizabeth did not suppose he would discard her as he had discarded Madame de la Touche, but he might die and leave her, if not unprovided for, at least with an income by no means equal to her desires or her ambition.

· Lastly, she was thirty-nine years old and neither her beauty nor her fascinations were quite what they were. She was blessed with a healthy appetite and dearly loved the pleasures of the table, and inclined to be less moderate than formerly in the use of her favourite wine, Burgundy. It was certain she was not so attractive as when a couple of dukes were suing for her hand. It is also extremely doubtful if she had an absorbing care for her present protector. Evelyn Pierrepont, Duke of Kingston, was not the most brilliant of men, and at times the lively lady must have found his society more than dull.

But how to establish her claim to be recognised as the Countess of Bristol when her husband succeeded to the title presented some difficulty. It must have puzzled the lady not a little. Fifteen years had passed since her secret marriage at night in the little private chapel at Lainston, but the clergyman who read the marriage service, her aunt Mrs. Hanmer who brought about the marriage, her cousin Mr. Merrill, and Anne Cradock who witnessed it, were still alive, and there was surely proof enough, even presuming the useful Mountenay could not be produced. But supposing the existing Earl of Bristol chose to be in no hurry to die? Mr. Amis, who was aged and in declining health, might depart from this world before the earl, and if so Elizabeth's chief witness would be gone. Indeed, in the absence of the clergyman, and with not a scrap of documentary evidence to uphold her claim, it would be no easy matter to prove her marriage in the face of her posing for fifteen years as the "Hon. Miss Chudleigh." For the awkward

fact had to be faced that the church of the parish of Lainston had no register !

It was certainly a most difficult obstacle to surmount, but the lady was not to be deterred, and she set herself perseveringly to overcome it. Down she went, accordingly, to Lainston, to see her cousin, Mr. Merrill, and consult with him.

Whether she was aware of the absence of a register before this visit, or that the importance of having one was pointed out to her by Merrill, is not certain, but this does not matter ; the outcome of her visit to her cousin was an arrangement by which the two were to meet at Winchester, where Mr. Amis, the aged clergyman, was now living.

Elizabeth was in a fever of impatience to get the thing over, and, rising long before daylight on the morning of February 12th, she travelled post-haste to Winchester, arriving about six o'clock at the "Blue Boar," where she put up. The "Blue Boar" was very conveniently situated for the lady's purpose ; it was immediately opposite the house of Mr. Amis, and all she had to do was to send the ostler across the road with a message to Mrs. Amis, telling the old lady of her arrival and of her desire to speak with her on a most important matter of business. Mrs. Amis, who, no doubt, knew all about the secret marriage, accordingly came over, and was made aware of the object of Elizabeth's visit. Whatever reason Elizabeth may have given Mrs. Amis for her anxiety to be in a position to assert her position as the Hon. Mrs. Hervey, we may be sure it was the best she could devise. She had more to gain by making the

elderly lady her friend than her enemy, and it is pretty certain she said nothing to shock the susceptibilities of the clergyman's wife. Mrs. Amis possibly knew nothing of Elizabeth's intrigue with the Duke of Kingston, and in all probability sympathised with her in her desire to establish her rights, and she invited "Mrs. Hervey" to call on her husband, and promised in the meantime to lay the matter before him.

Mr. Amis was very infirm, and at that moment was lying ill in bed, and what opposition he made to the irregularity suggested by his wife at the instance of Mrs. Hervey was probably very feeble. He consented to see Elizabeth, and she came into his room, and after lengthened conversation he agreed to make good the deficiency to the extent of certifying to the marriage in writing. It must, however, have surprised the easy-going old man to find, as he did, that Elizabeth and Mr. Merrill had already arranged the necessary legal formality, with a view to smoothing the way for the reverend gentleman, and saving him unnecessary trouble. Not long after the conversation between Elizabeth and the clergyman Mr. Merrill arrived, having with praiseworthy forethought provided himself with a sheet of stamped paper on which Mr. Amis was to write a certificate.

But the clergyman had his doubts, and the combined legal knowledge of himself, his wife, Mr. Merrill, and Elizabeth Chudleigh—if, indeed, there was any legal knowledge among the four—could not decide whether the writing of such a certificate was the proper way to proceed. Anyhow, Mr. Amis was disinclined

to put his pen to paper, and we can imagine how Elizabeth must have fretted and fumed at the unexpected delay. The now astute and experienced woman of the world could not fail to present a great contrast to the quiet and rather reserved bride Mr. Amis remembered, and one would like to know what the clergyman and his wife said to each other when they compared notes, as they doubtless did, after the impetuous Mrs. Hervey had departed.

For the moment there she was, and there she intended to remain until she obtained the written proof of her marriage. The question was what was to be done. Clearly a properly qualified legal opinion was indispensable, and a well-known attorney of Winchester, one Spearing, was sent for. While waiting for the attorney some one raised the curious objection that, while the certificate was being written out, the person most concerned ought not to be present. It does not appear who raised the point, but one would not be far wrong in hazarding the suggestion that the objector was Elizabeth herself. It was like her to foresee trouble with her husband over the business, and no doubt she wanted to be able to swear that she had no hand in the preparation of the certificate, and had used no undue pressure to obtain it.

At the same time she was determined to be in touch with so important a matter, and so it was arranged that while Mr. Amis was preparing the certificate she should be concealed in a cupboard in the room. Elizabeth must have had great influence over her friends, for they made no objection to this queer proposal—indeed, from the very beginning of the

business with the midnight marriage they seem to have been exceedingly complaisant and helpful.

Mr. Spearing arrived, the matter was laid before him, and the opinion of the man of law was that merely making a certificate and declaring it in the manner which had been proposed was not the best way of establishing the evidence which might be wanted. He therefore proposed that a "check-book" (as he called it) should be bought, and the marriage be registered in the usual form, and in the presence of Mrs. Hervey. As for the suggestion that it was improper she should be present at the making of the register he pooh-poohed it altogether, and desired she might be called, the purpose, as he pointed out, being perfectly fair—merely to state that in the form of a register, which many people knew to be true, and which those persons of honour, then present, gave no room to doubt. Accordingly his advice was taken, and the book was bought. The lawyer proceeded to inscribe in a fair round hand the title of the book thus: "Marriages, Births, and Burials in the Parish of Lainston," and, to make the thing complete, the first entry ran: "The 22nd day of August, 1742, buried Mrs. Susannah Merrill, relict of John Merrill, Esq." The next was: "The 4th of August, 1744, married the Honourable Augustus Hervey, Esq., to Miss Elizabeth Chudleigh, daughter of Colonel Thomas Chudleigh, late of Chelsea College, deceased, in the parish church of Lainston, by me, THOMAS AMIS."

Of course, what was stated was true enough, and the register, though produced irregularly, possibly had a legal value. At any rate, the certificate was sufficient

for Elizabeth, who, armed with a copy in her pocket, returned to London well satisfied with the result of her visit to Lainston.

The person most concerned in the proceedings was, with the exception of the attorney, the most level-headed of the party. She was always ready for contingencies, and she saw the importance of preserving the register. There was no provision for the storing of books at the little private chapel at Lainston, and the newly made register would have to be left in the custody of Mr. Amis. Elizabeth, however, bearing in mind the clergyman's feeble state of health, begged Mrs. Amis, in the case of anything happening to her husband, to hand the register to the keeping of Mr. Merrill.

It has been stated that to impress upon Mrs. Amis the importance of preserving the register Miss Chudleigh told her "it might be £100,000 in her way"; but on this point authorities differ, one biographer fixing this liberal offer at a later period, when, as he asserts, events took Elizabeth again to Lainston. Be this as it may, it would seem to be convenient at this point to follow the history of the register for the next five years. Not long after its preparation the death of Mr. Amis occurred, and his wife, in accordance with her promise, took the book to Mr. Merrill.

In the year 1764 Mrs. Hanmer died, and was buried at Lainston. A few days after Mr. Merrill desired her burial might be registered. The clergyman, a Mr. Kinchin, did not know of any register which belonged to the parish, but Mr. Merrill produced the book which Mr. Amis had made, and, taking it out

of the sealed cover in which it had remained from the date of its preparation, showed Kinchin the entry of the marriage, and bade him not mention it. Kinchin then made the third entry: "Buried December 10th, 1764, Mrs. Anne Hanmer, relict of the late Colonel William Hanmer," and delivered the book again to Mr. Merrill. In the year 1767 Mr. Merrill died, and a Mr. Bathurst, who married his daughter, found the book among his papers, and, taking it to be what it purported, a parish register, delivered it to Mr. Kinchin accordingly, who kept it in his possession, and when the occasion arrived made the fourth entry, "Buried, February 7th, 1767, John Merrill, Esq." Then, nothing happening to render further entries necessary, the register was forgotten till a very different occasion arose for inquiry concerning it.

For the time being Elizabeth was satisfied. She never suspected that her elaborate precautions were altogether unnecessary, and that her ingenious scheming would recoil on her own head. The Earl of Bristol, instead of dying, chose to get well, and, as time went on, rumours were flying about the Court that he was anxious to find himself a wife. But the earl's efforts in the matrimonial market were unsuccessful, and we have the gossiping Lady Mary Coke making this entry in her Journal: "Augustus Hervey, Lord Bristol's brother, made a visit the other day to Lady Townshend, and told her how much his brother had wished to marry, and that hitherto he had been unsuccessful, for that all the ladies he wished for had declined him." And they continued to decline him, for he never married, but he lived some seven or eight years after Elizabeth's

secret and hasty visit to Winchester, and long before his death Elizabeth had decided to abandon the idea of becoming the Countess of Bristol, and was devoting herself with more assiduity than ever to secure permanent rights over the Duke of Kingston.

It is doubtful whether at this time she contemplated marriage with the duke. The creation of the register had increased the difficulty of freeing herself from her husband ; she was not certain of his sentiments towards her, or what course he would adopt supposing she took the desperate step of committing bigamy. A bigamous marriage, being illegal, would defeat her object in connecting herself with the Duke of Kingston, which was to better her condition materially, and she had advanced so far in her relations with his grace that, had her husband taken the trouble, he could easily have secured proofs of her adultery. But he never concerned himself about her, and, whatever his object may have been in holding his tongue, he did so, and he was as careful as Elizabeth in not letting the world know anything about their secret marriage.

CHAPTER XV

Miss Chudleigh "entertains" at Kingston House—Walpole's description of the interior—Her breakfast on Prince Edward's birthday—The trial of Lord Ferrers—The Countess of Coventry and Lady Caroline Petersham amuse the town—The illness of Lady Coventry—The pathetic last hours of a Queen of Beauty—Death of George II.—Elizabeth in favour with his son—1759-60.

BY the spring of 1760 Kingston House, Knightsbridge, was ready for the reception of guests, and that the Duke of Kingston was no niggard of his purse was evident from the style in which it was ordered. Walpole, describing a breakfast from here in March 1760, says: "There was a concert for Prince Edward's birthday, and at three a vast collation, and all the town. The house is not fine, nor in good taste, but loaded with finery. Pictures, chests, cabinets, commodes, tables, stands, boxes, riding on one another's backs, and loaded with tureens, filigree figures, and everything upon earth. Every favour she [Elizabeth] has bestowed is registered by a bit of Dresden china. There is a glass case full of enamels, eggs, ambers, lapis-lazulis, cameos, toothpick-cases, and all kinds of trinkets—things that, she told me, were her playthings; another cupboard full of the finest japan and candlesticks and vases of rock-crystal, ready to be thrown down, in every corner."

In June there are more festivities. "You have heard before you left London," he writes to the Earl of Strafford, "of Miss Chudleigh's intended loyalty on the Prince's birthday. Poor thing! I fear she has thrown away above a quarter's salary. It was magnificent, and well understood. No crowd; and, though a sultry night, one was not a moment incommoded. The court was illuminated on the whole summit of the wall with a battlement of lamps, smaller ones on every step, and a figure of lanterns on the outside of the house. The virgin mistress began the ball with the Duke of York, who was dressed in a pale blue watered tabby, which, as I told him, if he danced much, would soon be tabby all over, like the man's advertisement [a stay-maker of the time, who advertised in the newspapers making stays at such a price, 'tabby all over']. But nobody did dance much. . . . Miss Chudleigh desired the gamblers would go into the garrets ('Nay, they are not garrets; it is only the roof of the house hollowed for upper servants—but I have no upper servants'). Everybody ran up. There is a low gallery with bookcases, and four chambers practised under the pent of the roof, each hung with the finest Indian pictures on different colours, and with Chinese chains of the same colours. Vases of flowers in each for nosegays, and in one retired nook a most critical couch!

"The lord of the festival was there, and seemed neither ashamed nor vain of the expense of his pleasures. At supper she [Elizabeth] offered him tokay, and told him she believed he would find it good. The supper was in two rooms, and very fine,

and on all the sideboards, and even on the chairs, were pyramids and troughs of strawberries and cherries. You would have thought she was kept by Vertumnus."

While Elizabeth was occupied in doing the honours of Kingston House her rivals, Lady Caroline Petersham, Lady Townshend, and Maria, Countess of Coventry, did not fail to amuse the town. "Lady Caroline Petersham," writes the candid chronicler of Strawberry Hill, about the time when Elizabeth was settling herself at Knightsbridge, "not to let the town quite lapse into politics, has entertained it with a new scene. She was, t'other night, at the play with her court, viz. Miss Ashe, Lord Barnard, M. Saint Simon, and her favourite footman, Richard—whom, under pretence of keeping places, she always keeps in her box the whole time, to see the play at his ease. Mr. Stanley, Colonel Vernon, and Mr. Vaughan arrived at the very end of the farce, and could find no room but a row and a half in Lady Caroline's box. Richard denied them entrance very impertinently, and so Stanley took him by the hair of his head, dragged him into the passage, and thrashed him. The heroine was outrageous, the heroes not at all so. She sent Richard to Fielding for a warrant. He would not grant it. And so it ended." Lady Caroline, it is very clear, was a firebrand, and, as Lady Harrington, continued to maintain her character to her last moments. Nine years later Lady Mary Coke wrote in her Journal :

"1st July, 1783.—I went this evening at a little before nine to town. It was the christening at the Duke of Rutland's, and after it was over the duchess

had a party. Lady Dowager Harrington was the godmother, and I played at cribbage with her. Her method is beneficial to herself, but not to others. When she won she took the money, when she lost she said she owed it; nay, more, the gentleman who was my partner she asked to put two shillings to the cards for her, and he saying he had only the money for himself, she got up without paying.

"*29th June, 1784.*—The first news Lady Holder-
nesse told me was that Lady Harrington died yesterday. She was, poor woman, in a great passion with one of her servants, and, in coming downstairs, fell, but was supported by a servant, and never spoke again. 'Tis supposed to be an apoplectic fit.

"*6th July, 1784.*—This evening I went to Lady Harrington's funeral. Her corpse arrived at the church at five minutes after seven o'clock. The hearse was drawn by six horses, and accompanied by two black coaches and six horses, with her own coach following. All the servants in deep mourning; two of the women cried. The clergyman met the corpse at the gate of the churchyard, and went before it into the church, saying, 'I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord,' etc. The coffin was magnificent—crimson velvet, with numbers of plates of her arms and coronets. She desired to be placed by her daughter, Lady Fortrose, whose coffin was so much decayed it was fallen in; yet the people of the church had intended, to save room, to place Lady Harrington's coffin upon it, which must have crushed it entirely. So I interposed, and desired the clergyman would order that it should be placed by her daughter, as she had requested;

in which I succeeded. Her story is now closed, and I hope she will find mercy."

Lady Coventry's *naïveté* continued to provide gossip duly retailed with much relish. On one occasion the King asked if she was not sorry that there were no masquerades (the wave of penitence which had passed over society by reason of the earthquakes had not quite subsided). Her reply was that she was tired of them, that she was surfeited with most sights, and there was but one left that she wanted to see—and that was a Coronation! King George told it himself at supper to his family with a great deal of good-humour. Walpole confesses that "at a great supper t'other night at Lord Hertford's, had she not been the best-humoured creature in the world, he should have made her angry. She said, in a very vulgar accent, if she drank any more she should be *muckibus*." "Lord," cried Lady Mary Coke, "what is that?" "Oh, it is Irish for *sentimental*," said Walpole gravely. She and Lady Caroline were still rival beauties, and Mrs. George Granville, in a letter to her husband, written about the date of Lord Hertford's "great supper," says: "There is a Prince of Nassau, a sovereign just arrived, who is much admired for his beauty, and a Morocco Ambassador, as much admired for his great politeness (though he does not speak a word in any known language); he gives the preference to Lady Caroline Petersham before Lady Coventry; he says she is a glorious creature, and handsomer than either of his three wives."

In the summer months on one occasion the giddy Lady Coventry, never slow to seize an opportunity

of posing before the public, furnished a topic for the letter-writers : "Will it be of any news to inform you," writes the Hon. J. West to Lord Nuneham, "that last Sunday, se'night, your friend Lady Coventry was mobb'd in the Park ? and that to prevent it, last Sunday twelve sergeants of the Guards were ordered to disperse themselves about in case of a riot, and a sergeant and twelve men were ready in case of wanting assistance. This her ladyship knew, went to the Park, and pretended to be frightened directly, desired the assistance of the officer on guard, who ordered the twelve sergeants to march abreast before her, and the sergeant and twelve men behind her, and in this pomp did the idiot walk all the evening with more mob about her than ever, as you may imagine ; her sensible husband supporting her on one side and Lord Pembroke on the other. This is at present the talk of the whole town."

The sensation of the early part of 1760 was the murder by the mad Earl Ferrers of his steward Johnson. Earl Ferrers, from the point of view of the lady of fashion, was not nearly so interesting a personage as McLean, the handsome young highwayman over whose fate high-born beauties wept. Earl Ferrers was neither handsome nor young, and he had treated his wife shamefully. But his trial in the House of Lords was, in its way, a show for the town, as Walpole does not fail to note. "Many peers were absent," he writes : "Lord Foley and Lord Jersey attended only the first day ; and Lord Huntingdon and my nephew, Orford (in compliment to his mother), as related to the prisoner, withdrew without voting.

But never was a criminal more literally tried by his *peers*, for the three persons who interested themselves most in the examination were at least as mad as he : Lord Ravensworth, Lord Talbot, and Lord Fortescue. Indeed, the first was almost frantic. The seats of the peeresses were not near full, and most of the beauties absent ; the Duchess of Hamilton and my niece Waldegrave, you know, lie in ; but, to the amazement of everybody, Lady Coventry was there ; and, what surprised me much more, looked as well as ever. I sat next but one to her, and should not have asked her if she had been ill—yet they are positive she has few weeks to live. She and Lord Bolingbroke seemed to have different thoughts, and were acting over all the old comedy of eyes. I sat in Lord Lincoln's gallery ; *you* and *I* know the convenience of it ; I thought it no great favour to ask, and he very obligingly sent me a ticket immediately, and ordered me to be placed in one of the best boxes. Lady Augusta was in the same gallery ; the Duke of York and his young brothers were in the Prince of Wales's box, who was not there, no more than the Princess, Princess Emily, nor the duke. It was an agreeable humanity in my friend, the Duke of York ; he would not take his seat in the House before the trial that he might not vote in it."

The earl was found guilty, and three weeks later Walpole has some pungent remarks in recording the execution. He says : "The extraordinary history of Lord Ferrers is closed : he was executed yesterday. Madness, that in other countries is a disorder, is here a systematic character : it does not hinder people from

forming a plan of conduct, and from even dying agreeably to it. You remember how the last Ratcliff died with the utmost propriety ; so did this horrid lunatic, coolly and sensibly. His own and his wife's relations had asserted that he would tremble at last. No such thing ; he shamed heroes. He bore the solemnity of a pompous and tedious procession of above two hours, from the Tower to Tyburn, with as much tranquillity as if he was only going to his own burial, not to his own execution. He even talked on indifferent subjects in the passage ; and if the sheriff and the chaplains had not thought that they had parts to act, too, and had not consequently engaged him in most particular conversation, he did not seem to think it necessary to talk on the occasion ; he went in his wedding clothes, marking the only remaining impression on his mind. The ceremony he was in a hurry to have over ; he was stopped at the gallows by the vast crowd, but got out of his coach as soon as he could, and was but seven minutes on the scaffold, which was hung with black, and prepared by the undertaker of the family at their expense. There was a new contrivance for sinking the stage under him, which did not play well, and he suffered a little by the delay, but was dead in four minutes. The mob was decent, and admired him, and almost pitied him. I suppose every highwayman will now preserve the blue handkerchief he has about his neck when he is married that he may die like a lord. With all his madness, he was not mad enough to be struck with his aunt Huntingdon's sermons. The Methodists have nothing to brag of his con-

version, though Whitefield prayed for him and preached about him."

It was rumoured at the time that, out of consideration for his lordship's rank, Jack Ketch used a silken rope, but there is no evidence that such was the case. It may, however, be true that Ferrers petitioned that he might go to the gallows in his landau with six horses instead of a mourning-coach. He was full of fantastic notions bordering on madness. His reason for wearing his wedding clothes, "of a light colour embroidered in silver," was that he thought his execution was at least as good an occasion for putting them on as that for which they were made. This whim explains Walpole's conjecture as to the highwayman and his blue handkerchief. Lord Ferrers's last act was to correct some verses he had written while in the Tower. In these lines he declared himself a questioner and a doubter "of what was true in life and death." Remembering the nobleman's views on these points, the chaplain, on the scaffold, had some hesitation in suggesting that it was the usual thing on such occasions to offer up a prayer, and asked his consent to say the Lord's Prayer, whereupon his lordship said he had no objection, as he had always thought there was something good in it.

This memorable trial was the last time that poor Lady Coventry was seen in public. She was very ill at the time, and the end came soon after. Predisposed to consumption, late hours, constant excitement, and, it is said, the immoderate use of dangerous cosmetics and face pigments, soon hastened the death of the vain, frivolous, shallow, but lovable Maria Gunning. In the

following year, on October 4th, she breathed her last, "concluding her short race" (she was but seven-and-twenty) "with the same attention to her looks." She lay constantly on a couch, with a pocket-glass in her hand, and when that told her how great the change was she took to her bed for the last fortnight, had no light in her room but the lamp of a tea-kettle, and at last took things in through the curtains of her bed without suffering them to be undrawn.

The pathos of the last hours of the poor beauty is heightened by an episode alluded to by George Selwyn. "Yesterday morning," he writes, "a letter came from the Duchess of Hamilton, directed for Lord Coventry. She [Lady Coventry] knew the hand, and unluckily opened it. *Illæ lachrymæ!* The duchess had too plainly explained her sentiments of Lady Coventry's condition; had lamented her as a sister whom she should never see; had entirely given her up, expressing her concern as for one already in the grave. You, who know how apt Lady Coventry is to be affected, may easily conceive the anguish which such a letter would occasion. Indeed, it did almost kill her. I was called to her, and found her almost fainting and dying away. However, she soon after recovered, and I took my leave; but after I was gone the same scene was several times renewed. Her attendants thought her expiring. In their hurry they despatched an express to my lord, who, I suppose, will, in consequence of that, be here this evening." The mob, who never quitted curiosity about her, went, to the number of ten thousand, only to see her coffin.

Three weeks afterwards the gloom cast over the town

by the loss of its favourite countess was deepened by the death of the King, without the slightest warning. A rupture in some of the vessels or in the membrane of the heart carried him off in a few minutes. During his whole life, but particularly for a number of years before his decease, he had been subject to such constant palpitations about the cardiac regions, especially after dinner, that he always took off his clothes and reposed himself for an hour in bed of an afternoon. In order to accommodate himself to this habit or infirmity, Mr. Pitt, who, as Secretary of State, was sometimes necessitated to transact business with the King during the time that he lay down, always knelt on a cushion by the bedside—a mark of respect which contributed to render him not a little acceptable to his Majesty. At his rising George II. dressed himself completely a second time, and commonly passed the evening at cards with Lady Yarmouth in a select party.

His sight had greatly failed him for some time preceding his death. "I have heard," Wraxall writes, "Mr. Fraser say, who was during many years Under-Secretary of State, that in 1760, a few months before the King died, having presented a paper to him for his signature at Kensington, George II. took the pen in his hand, and after, as he conceived, affixing his name to it, returned it to Fraser. But so defective was his vision that he had neither dipped his pen in the ink nor did he perceive that, of course, he had only drawn it over the paper without making any impression. Fraser, aware of the King's blindness, yet unwilling to let his Majesty perceive that he had

discovered it, said, 'Sir, I have given you so bad a pen that it will not write; allow me to present you a better pen for the purpose.' Then, dipping it himself in the ink, he returned it to the King, who, without making any remark, instantly signed the paper."

This weakening of the sight accounts for the King's insistence on the matter of large writing and black ink. The Duke of Newcastle, writing to the Duke of Rutland's secretary in 1760, says: "The King is extremely pleased with you, and has desired the Duke of Rutland to tell you to have your letters wrote in a larger hand and blacker ink." The wishes of the King in this respect were well known, as is evidenced by a letter written, also in this year, by General Mostyn to the Duke of Newcastle in reference to a dispute that he had had with the blundering, incompetent General Cope (Johnny Cope), who was defeated at Preston Pans. "You may tell his grace," wrote the angry Mostyn, "that I wrote that letter in a large black Munrickhausen hand on purpose that ye King should read it. You may tell him, too, that I wish Cope and his regiments all at ye devil."

With George II. passed away one of Elizabeth Chudleigh's patrons, and the wits did not forget to make use of the event to cast a gibe at her. "*Bon mots* come thicker than changes," writes Walpole. Charles Townshend, receiving an account of the impression the King's death had made, was told Miss Chudleigh cried. "What?" said he; "oysters?" Not a very brilliant witticism, but no doubt it served. Anything, in fact, was considered good enough for a

peg on which to hang a smart saying where Miss Chudleigh was concerned, and Walpole certainly never lost an opportunity of recording such. On December 11th of this year he wrote: "Propriety is so much in fashion that Miss Chudleigh has called for the council books of the subscription concert, and has struck out the name of Mrs. Naylor." Mrs. Naylor was a notorious woman of the day, and one can imagine the sly chuckles of the scandal-mongers at the droll idea of Miss Chudleigh having scruples in regard to such persons. Whatever faults Elizabeth may have had, and doubtless she had her share, want of courage and super-sensitiveness were not among them. If the tittle-tattle reached her ears she was perfectly indifferent to it, and she could afford to be, for she was never snubbed at Court by those in power. She never lost credit in the estimation of the Dowager-Princess of Wales, who, to the day of her death, maintained the strong friendship which had begun in 1743, with the admission of Elizabeth as one of her maids of honour. The young king, who at the end of 1760 was called to the throne, must have liked her, as throughout the equivocal days before the marriage ceremony which made Elizabeth the Duchess of Kingston in the eyes of the public, he never withdrew his patronage, and she continued to receive invitations to the various court functions. Nor did the young Queen show any signs of coldness, and with George and Charlotte on her side Elizabeth could afford to be indifferent to the stings of gossiping gadflies.

CHAPTER XVI

Accession of George III.—His love for Lady Sarah Lennox—A marriage "arranged" with Princess Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz—The Dowager-Princess Augusta and Lord Bute—Walpole's gossip—Arrival of Princess Charlotte: the hurried marriage and Coronation—Blunders of the Earl Marshal and the squabbles of aristocratic ladies—The tyranny of fashion—Miss Chudleigh at an auction sale—The shortcomings of the royal kitchen, and troubles of the maids of honour—1760-61.

THE accession of George III. to the throne of England was the great event of 1760. More than common interest was taken in the young King, who was then in his twenty-third year, because he was unmarried, and curiosity was all agog to be satisfied on the question of his choice. It was known that he was in love with Lady Sarah Lennox, the beautiful daughter of the second Duke of Richmond. George had been much struck with the charming young lady when he was Prince of Wales, and nothing but the difficulty Lady Sarah had in making up her mind prevented the budding love-affair ripening into a match. But much may be excused her, for in 1760 she was but sixteen, and her head was turned with the admiration she excited.

Lady Sarah Lennox had succeeded the Gunning sisters as "Queen of Beauty," and of her attractiveness

there is ample evidence. Her brother-in-law, Harry Fox, who married her sister, Lady Caroline Lennox, writes : " Her beauty is not easily described, otherwise than by saying she had the finest complexion and most beautiful hair and prettiest person that was ever seen, with a sprightly and fine Air, a pretty Mouth, and remarkably fine teeth and excess of bloom in her cheeks, little eyes ; but this is not describing her, for her great beauty was a peculiarity of countenance, and made her at the time different from and prettier than any other girl I ever saw." Walpole enthusiastically speaks of her concerning an amateur performance of *Jane Shore*, with Lady Sarah in a titled part, that " no Magdalen by Correggio was half so lovely and expressive."

On every side there were lovers ready to propose, with the young Prince the most eligible of them all, and the most sincere. Perhaps the young lady did not imagine he was in earnest, for princes had a habit in those days of proving that sometimes at least " things are not what they seem." But George was not a Prince of this type, and if he was remarkable for anything, it was obstinacy, and that he would have made Lady Sarah Lennox his wife there can hardly be a doubt. After he became King he renewed his attentions, and nothing but the coyness of the lady stood in his way.

The inclination of the King for the beautiful Lady Sarah was no secret, and opinions were divided, not only in the Court, but outside. Pamphlets were written for and against the King of Great Britain allying himself with a subject, and the controversy was

beginning to wax warm when, on July 8th, 1761, *The Gazette Extraordinary* put an end to all conjecture. This paper announced that his Majesty had declared his resolution of demanding in marriage the Princess Charlotte, sister to the reigning Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, a young lady of no claims to beauty, but stated to be distinguished for talents and amiable qualifications.

The marriage was most probably arranged by the Dowager-Princess Augusta and her close friend Lord Bute. The young King was greatly attached to Lord Bute, who exercised considerable influence over him, and this personal attachment rather weakens the stories that were afloat concerning the relations of his mother with the nobleman in question. These stories would seem to rest mainly on the malice of Walpole, who was always ready to hand when any gossip reflecting on the Court of the Princess Augusta was current. While the Princess was a widow he wrote: "It had already been whispered that the assiduity of Lord Bute at Leicester House and his still more frequent attendance in the Gardens at Kew and Carlton House were less addressed to the Prince of Wales [*i.e.* the future George III.] than his mother. The eagerness of the pages of the backstairs to let her know whenever Lord Bute arrived, and some other symptoms attributed to dispel the ideas that had been conceived of the rigour of her widowhood. On the other hand, the favoured personage, naturally ostentatious of his person and of haughty carriage, seemed by no means desirous of concealing his conquest. His bows grew more theatric, his grace contracted more meaning, and the beauty of

his leg was constantly displayed in the eyes of the poor captivated Princess." Walpole also asserts that Frederick, during his lifetime, actually encouraged a kindly feeling between Lord Bute and his wife. "Her simple husband," remarks the cynic, "when he took up the character of the Regent's gallantry, had forced an air of intrigue even upon his wife. When he affected to retire into gloomy alleys with Lady Middlesex, he used to bid the Princess walk with Lord Bute. Since the Prince was dead they walked more and more in honour of his memory." Again on March 3rd, 1761, in a letter to Horace Mann, he fires a doubled-barrelled gun aimed at the two persons he most loved to ridicule. At his reference to the publicity of a caricature, one of many with which the town was then flooded, "There has been," he says, "a droll print. Her mistress (the Princess-Dowager) reproving Miss Chudleigh for her train of life. She replies, 'Madame, Chaque a son *But*.'"

Whatever may have been the relations of the Princess with Lord Bute, the marriage of the young King to Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz was decided upon, Lord Harcourt was sent to Germany to demand her serene highness, and the Duchesses of Ancaster and Hamilton accompanied him to escort her to England in one of the ships of the fleet under the command of Lord Anson.

It was fortunate for the young Princess that she was an excellent sailor, for the weather was as bad as it well could be all the way. For ten days, owing to adverse and violent gales, the royal yacht was baffled

in its attempts to make an English harbour. At one time it was in danger of being driven on the coast of Norway. The Duchesses of Ancaster and Hamilton, both of them invalids, suffered agonies from sea-sickness. The Princess, however, was only slightly indisposed, and then scarcely for half an hour. During the voyage she maintained her usual gaiety, sometimes talking freely with the officers, but principally amusing herself with playing English tunes upon her harpsichord.

"They had a most hazardous voyage," writes Mrs. Stuart, who tells the story, "and at one time feared not making England; but while the other ladies were crying, she (the Princess) was undaunted, consoled them, prayed, sang Luther's hymns, and when the tempest a little subsided, sang 'God Save the King' to her guitar."

Charlotte's determination to make the best of everything did not desert her when she reached England and saw the grandeur of the preparations for the wedding; but as the time approached for meeting her future husband she was a little agitated, at which the Duchess of Hamilton, remembering the tempestuous wooing of her duke and her runaway marriage at Keith's chapel, laughed a little.

"My dear duchess," said the Princess, slightly annoyed, "you may laugh—you, who have been married twice; but it is no joke to me."

The marriage was hurried on with all speed, for which there may have been some reason. On arriving at St. James's Palace on September 8th, the Princess Charlotte was received by all the royal

family; the Duke of York handed her from the coach, and in the garden she was met by the royal bridegroom, who "saluted her with the greatest affection and led her to the palace, where she dined with the King, the Princess-Dowager and the rest of the family. The Princess was under no delusions as to the part she intended to play as Queen of England. She commenced as she intended to go on. While she was dressing for dinner, ladies happening to remark that the King preferred some particular mode of dress. "Let him dress himself," she replied; "I shall dress as I please." Being told that the King liked keeping early hours, she replied that she had no partiality for them, adding—"Qu'elle ne voulait pas se coucher avec les poules." But the sharpness of the Princess's replies may be accounted for by the fact that her nerves were a little unstrung, for at eight o'clock the same evening she was to be married.

The ceremony was performed by Dr. Secker, Archbishop of Canterbury, the Duke of Cumberland giving the Princess away; and the ordeal must have been rather a trying one for the bride, coming as it did at the end of the long and fatiguing day. One is tempted to ask is the haste to be accounted for by some lurking fear in the mind of the Princess-Dowager and Lord Bute lest the young King should change his mind?

However, the King was married, and no more need be said about it. A fortnight after came the Coronation in Westminster Hall, and there seems to have been as much hurry over this as over the marriage

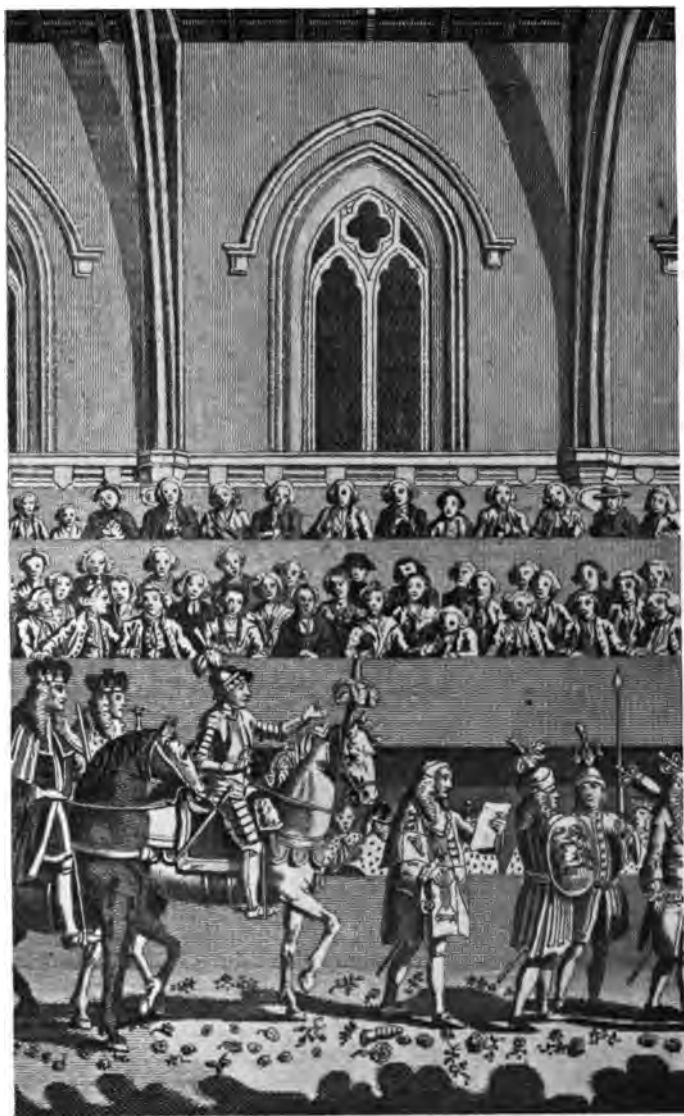
ceremony. The lack of preparation was very apparent, and Walpole does not fail to make merry over the shortcomings of the officials. He writes to George Montagu: "The blaze of lights, the richness and variety of habits, the ceremonial, the benches of peers and peeresses 'frequent and full,' was as awful as a pageant can be, and yet for the King's sake—and my own—I never wish to see another; nor am impatient to have my Lord Effingham's promise fulfilled—the King complained that so few precedents were kept for this proceeding. Lord Effingham owned the Earl Marshal's office had been strangely neglected; but he had taken such care for the future that the 'next Coronation' would be regulated in the most exact manner imaginable. The number of peers and peeresses present was not very great. Some of the latter, with no excuse in the world, appeared in Lord Lincoln's gallery, and even walked about the Hall indecently in the intervals of the procession. My Lady Harrington, 'covered with all the diamonds she could borrow, buy, or seize,' and with the air of Roxana, was the finest figure at a distance; she complained to George Selwyn that she was to walk with Lady Portsmouth, who would have a wig and a stick. 'Pho,' said he, 'you will only look as if you were taken up by a constable.' She told this everywhere, thinking the reflection was on my Lady Portsmouth. . . . Lord Bolingbroke put rouge upon his wife and the Duchess of Belfast in the Painted Chamber; the Duchess of Queensberry told me of the latter that she looked like an orange peach, half red and half yellow. . . . The Champion acted his

part admirably, and dashed down his gauntlet with proud defiance, and his associates, Lord Effingham, Lord Talbot, and the Duke of Bedford were woful, yet the last the least ridiculous of the three. Lord Talbot piqued himself on backing his horse down the Hall, and not turning its rump towards the King, but he had not taken such pains to dress it to that duty that it entered backwards, and at his retreat the spectators clapped—a terrible indecorum, but suitable to such Bartholomew Fair doings. He had twenty *demeles*, and came out of none creditably. He had taken away the table of the Knights of the Bath, and was forced to admit two in their old place, and dine the others in the Court of Requests. Sir William Stanhope said, ‘We are ill-treated, for some of us are gentlemen.’”

On the following day Walpole resumes his description in a letter to Conway: “I saw the procession and the Hall, but the return was in the dark. In the morning they had forgot the Sword of State, the Chairs for King and Queen, and their canopies. They used the Lord Mayor’s for the first, and made the last in the Hall, so they did not set forth till noon, and then, by a childish compliment to the King, reserved the illumination of the Hall till his entry, by which means they most looked like a funeral, nothing being discernible but the plumes of the Knights of the Bath, which seemed the hearse. Lady Kildare, the Duchess of Richmond, and Lady Pembroke were the Capital beauties. Lady Harrington the finest figure at a distance. . . . Of all the incidents of the day the most diverting was what happened to the Queen.

She had a retiring chamber, with *all* conveniences, prepared behind the altar. She went thither, in the *most convenient* ; what found she but the Duke of Newcastle ! . . . Some of the peeresses were dressed overnight, slept in arm-chairs, and were asked if they tinkled their beads. Your sister Harris's maid, Lady Peterborough, was a comely figure. My Lady Cowper refused, but was forced to walk with Lady Macclesfield ; Lady Falmouth was not there, on which George Selwyn said 'that those peeresses who were most used to *walk* did not.' . . . The Duchess of Queensberry walked ! Her affectation that day was to do nothing preposterous. The Queen had been at the Opera, and says she will go once a week. This is a fresh disaster to our box, where we have lived so harmoniously for three years. We can get no alternative but that of Miss Chudleigh's, and Lord Stafford and Lady Mary Coke will not subscribe unless we can."

Earl Marshals are the most unlucky of court officials. There has never been an important ceremonial function, from royal marriages to royal funerals, at which something did not go wrong. The observance of musty procedure, and the attempt to fit the routine of etiquette and precedence, appropriate enough in the days when it was instituted, to a totally different order of things and ideas, combine to form a task which would tax the capacity and ingenuity of an experienced showman. When it is entrusted to some one totally unfitted for the office, chaos may be expected. No doubt poor Lord Effingham did his best, and he could not have been less rejoiced than



THE CHAMPION'S CHALLENGE AT THE CORONATION IN
WESTMINSTER HALL

Walpole when the business was over. The opportunities for places to view the proceedings must alone have been distracting. Apropos of this, the critic of Strawberry Hill writes: "I was extremely diverted the other day with my mother's and my old milliner. She said she had a petition to me. 'What is it, Mrs. Burton?' 'It is in behalf of two poor orphans.' I began to feel for my purse. 'What can I do for them, Mrs. Burton?' 'Only if your honour would be so compassionate as to get them tickets for the Coronation.' I could not keep my countenance—and the, distressed 'orphans' are two and three and twenty! Did you ever hear a more melancholy case?"

Lord Effingham did not repeat the blunder of his predecessor at the previous Coronation, where there were no precautions taken against overcrowding, and where noble ladies were kept practically imprisoned for hours, and would have been starved but for the drawing up of food in baskets into the gallery where they were packed. Nor was there any anticipation of the extraordinary shifts the visitors were put to on the occasion of the next Coronation in 1821. Miss Hope Johnstone, writing to her father, Admiral Sir William Johnstone Hope, describing the Coronation of George IV., says there were two thousand ladies and gentlemen sleeping on the benches of the House of Lords at six o'clock on Friday morning. Five hundred carriages never got up to the Abbey or Hall to bring home their mistresses, and were seen standing in a string from Hyde Park Corner, with many of the horses taken off and feeding at the side of the street

and the servants asleep on the pavement. "Frederick Hope took charge of Miss Kinnaird till two, but he grew too sleepy for further use, so a peer proposed they should repose together, as his robe was large enough to cover both, and they slept for two hours, Frederick's cocked hat serving as a pillow to a lady reposing at their feet. Imagine the scene, the robed peers and feathered ladies all sprawling promiscuously on the benches, floor, steps of the throne in a sleep so profound as if they were enchanted." It would seem, however, that some of the inconveniences the court beauties suffered at the Coronation of George III., apart from the companionship of "undesirables," were not due to any neglect on the part of the Earl Marshal, but to the inexorable laws of fashion. What the ladies had to submit to in regard to their hair is hinted at in the statement that they were "dressed over-night."

With the commencement of the reign of George III. hair-dressing became, as Mr. T. Wright tells us, an intricate and difficult science, and was made the subject of several elaborate publications. To raise up the lofty pile of hair and fill it out with materials to give it due elasticity, to arrange the vast curls that flanked it, and to give grace to the feathers and flowers with which it was crowned, was not within the capacity of every vulgar coiffeur. The interior of the mass which rose above the head was filled with wool, tow, hemp, etc., and the quantity of pomatum and other materials used with it must have produced an effect calculated to disgust all who were not absolutely mad upon fashion. An ode to the ladies in 1768, printed in the "New

Foundling Hospital for Wit," describes the lover's astonishment at his mistress's headdress :

When he views your tresses thin,
Tortured by some French *friseur*,
Horse-hair, hemp, and wool within,
Garnished with a diamond skewer;
When he scents the mingled steam
Which your plastered heads are rich in,
Lard and meal and clouted cream,
Can he love a walking kitchen?

When we consider that the great labour of arranging this strange structure hindered its being repeated often and that it was sometimes kept two or three weeks before it was broken up, being merely retouched externally, and covered with fresh odours to conceal any disagreeable smell which might issue from the interior, we shall readily believe the accounts given by those who wrote and preached against the ridiculous enormities of fashion, and who assure us that the interiors of the ladies' headdresses were commonly filled with vermin. In *The London Magazine* for August 1768 a correspondent on this subject says : "I went the other morning to make a visit to an elderly aunt of mine, when I found her pulling off her cap and tendering her head to the ingenious Mr. Gilchrist, who has lately obliged the public with a most excellent essay upon hair. He asked her *how long it was since her head had been opened or repaired*. She answered '*Not above nine weeks.*' To which he replied that *that was as long as a head could well go in summer, and that therefore it was proper to deliver it now*, for he confessed that it began to be a little *hazarde.*"

The caricaturists, as might be expected, were busy with their monstrous decorations of the head, and they did their best to improve upon the originals. A print published on May 8th, 1777, represents what is described as a "new-fashioned headdress for young misses of three-score and ten," which is a picture not much exaggerated of the fashion prevalent in that year. Two men are required to place the enormous fabric in position. The large nosegay, and the long waving plumes are strictly in character.

But above all the rest,
A bold Amazon's crest,
Wares, nodding from shoulder to shoulder,
At once to surprise,
And to ravish all eyes,
To frighten and charm the beholder.

The young Queen Charlotte tried to introduce reforms, but tried in vain. The English ladies of fashion were not to be led, even by their Queen. Her Majesty's first endeavour was to reduce the towering mountain of hair to a size more suited to the length and breadth of the face, and next to introduce a cap neither so diminutive as to be nearly invisible nor of such magnitude as to bury the features of the wearer. She failed utterly. Broad and towering headdresses continued still the rage and so continued until a love of novelty induced the ladies, of their own accord, to change to something less absurd. As an instance of how the follies of fashion influence the ways of life, it is interesting to note that the doors of enormous altitude still to be seen in some of the mansions built about this period were designed solely to accommodate

the headdresses of the ladies, and to preserve their glory intact and unimpaired on their owners entering the drawing-room.

That Elizabeth was present at the coronation procession is certain. It was the second time she had assisted at a great function in Westminster. On the third occasion she herself was the central figure, and no one of the assembled lords had eyes for any one else. In 1761 it is clear, from the reference to her and to her box at the opera, that she was a personage of some distinction and spent her money right royally. She was busy in adding to the attractions of Kingston House, as is indicated again by Walpole, who could no more keep her out of his letters than Mr. Dick could keep the head of Charles I. out of his talk. Writing on December 23rd, 1761, about a specimen of Jean Petitot's painting in enamel, he says: "I have picked up, at Mrs. Dunch's auction, the sweetest petitot in the world—the very picture of James the Second that he gave Mrs. Godfrey—and I paid but six guineas and a half for it. I will not tell you how vast a commission I had given; but I will own that about the hour of sale I drove about the door to find what likely bidders there were—the first coach I saw was the Chudleigh's; could I help concluding that a maid of honour kept by a duke would purchase the portrait of a duke that kept a maid of honour? But I was mistaken."

As a maid of honour of considerable experience, Elizabeth must have laughed heartily at the troubles which fell upon the ladies of the young King's Court through the shortcomings of the royal kitchen. The

definite cause is not forthcoming, and whether the orders for economy were issued by George or by his mother, the Princess-Dowager, is not certain. Lord Talbot, however, filled the office of Lord Steward of the Household, having been appointed in March 1761, and on him the blame fell, especially at the hands of the caricaturists, who got hold of the scandal and made the most of it. No doubt the Lord Steward was carrying out his instructions, as heavy expenses were contemplated in other directions, possibly with a view to the King's marriage. It is not quite certain when the economies were commenced, but as the grievance was at its height in 1762, it is by no means improbable that Queen Charlotte had brought with her her German frugality, which soon made its effects felt. "As neither gravity, rank, interest, abilities, nor morals could be adduced to countenance this strange exaltation," writes Walpole, "no wonder it caused very unfavourable comments. As the Court knew that the measures it had in contemplation could only be carried out by money, every stratagem was invented to curtail the common expenses of the palace. As these fell into the province of the Lord Steward, nothing was heard of but cooks cashiered and kitchens shut up. Even the maids of honour, who did not expect rigours from a great officer of Lord Talbot's complexion, were reduced to complain of the abridgment of their allowance for breakfast. The public joined in the cry, and the shops teemed with scandalous prints against the reformer and his patroness."

This account of the squabbles in the household is corroborated in an unpublished letter addressed by

Mrs. Daniel Fox to a friend in December 1762. The writer relates that "the two German women who attend the Queen fall out with their Bread and Butter. They dine by themselves, and their dinner being sent up in silver, they sent it down to be put into the King's gilt plate, or they would not eat it. The officers of the kitchen returned for answer that they would keep the dinner hot till they chose to eat, but the King's gilt plate could be used by nobody but the King and Queen without the King's express order. The next day the Ladies sent down that the King had ordered them the gilt plate, and they expected to have it, but the officers of the kitchen refused, alleging that the order must come to them thro' Lord Talbot, and the day after they apply'd to Lord Talbot to know if the ladies were to have the gilt plate. 'No,' says he, 'nor the silver either—let them have the pewter; it is quite as good as they have been used to.' So the poor ladies were reduced to pewter" (George Paston).

Times certainly had changed: there were no economies of this kind in the Courts either of George II. or his son Frederick, Prince of Wales.

CHAPTER XVII

The Earl of Bath's meanness—Miss Chudleigh's balls and entertainments at Kingston House—She celebrates the Queen's birthday with fireworks—The Duke of Kingston's pretty milliner—Elizabeth at variance with the duke—She goes to Germany and is graciously received by the Electoress of Saxony—She returns to England and makes up her differences with the duke—She is financially embarrassed and borrows money—Her friendly relations with the Duchess of Queensberry—Eccentricities of the duchess—1761-7.

FOR some five years after the young King's accession Elizabeth appears to have settled quietly at Kingston House, Knightsbridge, where she entertained her friends after the fashion of the great ladies of her day, marked by an originality quite her own. She had her favourite associates, and she also had her enemies, among them Lady Mary Coke, who never lost an opportunity of inserting something spiteful in her amusing Journal, and, of course, Horace Walpole. An odd reminiscence of Elizabeth's elderly admirer in her 'teens, Pulteney, since made Earl of Bath, occurs in a letter recording the scandal caused by Lord Pulteney, the earl's son, flying in the face of his father and refusing to marry the lady picked out for him. Walpole says: "I know nothing else but elopements. Lord Bath has lost his only son

[Lord Pulteney], who is run away from thirty thousand pounds a year, which in all probability would have come to him in six months. There has been some great fracas about his marriage; the stories are various on the 'why.' Some say his father told Miss Nicholl that his son was a very worthless young man; others that the earl could not bring himself to make tolerable settlements; and a third party says that the countess had blown up a quarrel in order to have his son in her power and at her mercy. Whatever the cause was, this ingenious young man, who you know has made my Lady Townshend his everlasting enemy by repeating her histories of Miss Chudleigh to that Miss—of all counsellors in the world—picked out my Lady Townshend to consult on his domestic grievances. She, with all the good-nature and charity imaginable, immediately advised him to be disinherited. He took her advice, left two dutiful letters for his parents to notify his disobedience, and went off last Friday night to France."

Lady Townshend bore Elizabeth no good-will. They were probably rivals in the same field of gallantry, and one can imagine that the "Histories of Miss Chudleigh," in the mouth of the not-over-scrupulous Lady Townshend, acquired a very piquant flavour. Lord Pulteney seems to have been a very foolish young man. His death in 1763 gave his father an opportunity of showing his well-known qualities of meanness and avarice. Lord Pulteney left a kind of will, saying he had nothing to give, but made request to the earl to give his post-

chaise and a hundred pounds to his cousin Colman (George Colman, son of Lady Bath's sister, author of *The Jealous Wife*, *The Clandestine Marriage*, and other dramatic works, and afterwards manager of the Little Theatre in the Haymarket); the same sum and his pictures to Lockwood, another cousin; and recommended other cousins to his father. Lord Bath sent Colman and Lockwood word they might get their hundred pounds as they could, and for their chaise and pictures, they might buy them if they pleased, for they would be sold for his son's debts. He added he did not know what business it was of his son to recommend heirs to him. Lord Pulteney is among the undistinguished departed who crowd Westminster Abbey, Lord Bath having purchased the Hatton vault. Here, says the spiteful scribe, he "squeezed his wife and daughter into it, reserved room for himself, and set the rest to sale." The last piece of scandal, however, is untrue, and was subsequently set right by a correspondent of *The Gentleman's Magazine*.

After Lord Bath was a widower, and had been made childless, by the loss of his son, unattached ladies made offers of marriage to him, he being one of the wealthiest men of the day. They proposed seriously, like Mrs. Anne Pitt, or by strong innuendo, like Lady Bell Finch. The latter, on Lord Bath returning to her half-a-crown which he had borrowed, wished he could give her a "crown." Lady Bell replied that though he could not give her a crown, he could give her a coronet, and that she was ready to accept it! After the earl's death, his will was as much the subject of

conversation as his decease. Chesterfield calculated that in money and land he left to the value of £2,400,000, and made his brother, General Pulteney, whom he never loved, his sole legatee. "The legacies he has left are trifling ; for, in truth, he cared for nobody. The words 'give' and 'bequeath' were too shocking for him to repeat, and so he left all in one word, to his 'brother.'"

Elizabeth found it impossible to do things like anybody else. She was nothing if not original and unconventional, and, whatever her detractors may have said, she served a very useful purpose in furnishing topics for conversation, and adding to the gaiety of the town. Her balls and entertainments always set tongues wagging, and one notable example of her inventive faculty and of her defiance of the orthodox is well seen in her function of May 1763. Walpole, as usual, helps us to realise the scene :

"Oh that you had been at her ball t'other night !" he writes to Conway. "History could never describe it and keep its countenance. The Queen's real birthday, you know, is not kept : this maid of honour kept it—nay, while the Court is in mourning, expected people to be out of mourning ; the Queen's family really was so, Lady Northumberland having desired leave for them. A scaffold was erected in Hyde Park for fireworks. To show the illuminations without to more advantage, the company were received in an apartment totally dark, where they remained for two hours. If this gave rise to any more birthdays, who could help it ? The fireworks were fine, and succeeded well. On each side of the court were two large

scaffolds for the virgin's trades-people. When the fireworks ceased a large scene was lighted in the court, representing their Majesties, on each side of which were six obelisks, painted with emblems and illuminated mottoes beneath in Latin and English: 1. For the Prince of Wales, a ship, *Multorum spes*. 2. For the Princess-Dowager, a bird of paradise, and *two* little ones, *Meos ad sidera tollo*. People smiled. 3. Duke of York, a temple, *Virtuti et honori*. 4. Princess Augusta, a bird of paradise, *Non habet parem*—unluckily this was translated, *I have no peer*. People laughed out, considering where this was exhibited. 5. The three younger Princes, an orange-tree, *Promittit et dat*. 6. The two younger Princesses, the flower crown-imperial. I forget the Latin: the translation was silly enough, *Bashful in youth, graceful in age*. The lady of the house made many apologies for the poorness of the performance, which she said was only oil-paper, painted by one of her servants, but it really was fine and pretty. The Duke of Kingston was in a frock, *comme chez lui*. Behind the house was a cenotaph for the Princess Elizabeth, a kind of illuminated cradle; the motto, *All the honours the dead can receive*. This burying-ground was a strange codicil to a festival, and, what was more strange, about one in the morning this sarcophagus burst out into crackers and guns. The Margrave of Anspach began the ball with the virgin. The supper was most sumptuous."

Nearly all the leading members of the aristocracy were present, and the occasion was considered of such importance, and Elizabeth so great a personage, that the Duke of Rutland wrote from Rutland House,

The Duke of Kingston's "Pretty Milliner" 297

through his secretary Thoroton, apologising to the Duke of Newcastle for his inability to keep an engagement he had made with the duke, on the ground that he had "entirely overlooked" that he had to attend with the Marquis of Granby "their neighbour's fireworks at Kingston House." The Duke of Newcastle replied that he was so impatient of the honour and pleasure of seeing Lord Granby that he should expect his lordship and Thoroton the day after Miss Chudleigh's party. Elizabeth at this period evidently was a lady who exacted deference.

Towards the end of the same year came a disturbing incident, which must have for some time upset Miss Chudleigh's peace of mind, and have given her reason to doubt whether her hold over the duke was so strong as she believed it to be. She discovered that his grace's fickle fancy was roving in other directions, and considerable trouble was caused her in consequence. Elizabeth's enemies were delighted, of course. Walpole tells the story after his manner as follows: "His grace of Kingston has taken a pretty milliner from Cranbourne Alley, and carried her to Thoresby. Miss Chudleigh, at the Princess's birthday on Friday, beat her side till she could not help having a real pain in it, that people might inquire what was the matter; on which she notified a pleurisy, and that she is going to the baths of Carlsbad, in Bohemia." Lady Mary Coke has her own version, and wrote in her Journal, one can fancy, with malicious glee: "Miss Chudleigh is going to wash herself in the Baths in Bohemia. They will be very famous if they can cleanse her from all her disorders. She sets out in February, and has,

as the town says, left the Duke of Kingston a milliner, that she found in Cranbourne Alley, to supply her place during her absence ; but others say they have quarrelled, and that she leaves England on that account."

The reason Elizabeth gave for going to the German baths deceived no one. In the course of her tour she called on Lord Chesterfield's son, who was in Germany at the time, and in a letter to the young man Lord Chesterfield says : "Your guest, Miss Chudleigh, is another problem which I cannot solve. She no more wanted the waters of Carlsbad than you did. Is it to show the Duke of Kingston that he cannot live without her ? A dangerous experiment ! which may possibly convince her that he can. There is a trick, no doubt, in it, but what I neither know nor care ; you did very well to show her civilities, *cela ne gâte jamais rien.*"

How long Miss Chudleigh remained out of England it is impossible to say. The duke did not accompany her, and it is more than likely that the lady gave his grace a piece of her mind concerning the pretty milliner, which for a time lessened their affectionate relations. The contemporary chronicles, save Lord Chesterfield's letter given above, are silent through 1765, and the reasonable explanation is that she was abroad a good deal during this year. She seems to have made herself very acceptable to the various foreign Courts, and her assurance, her liveliness spiced with eccentricity, must have presented a pleasing contrast to the airs and graces which the majority of English ladies displayed when on the Continent. In

October 1766 Lady Mary Coke writes: "All the news she [Lady Dalkeith] told me was that Miss Chudleigh was set out to Dresden to visit the Electoress of Saxony, who, she says, has given her jewels to a very considerable value. One must say her royal highness bestows her favours with *judgment*." The feminine sarcasm of the last few words is quite characteristic of the industrious journalist.

In due time Elizabeth was back in England, and had made up her quarrel with the Duke of Kingston, who probably had discovered that he could not do without her. She resumed her sway at Kingston House, but no longer with her former magnificence. The fact seems to be that, in spite of the duke's long purse, she had run into debt. Perhaps the difference over the "little milliner" had something to do with shortening his allowance; but whatever may have been the cause, it is certain that she borrowed £5,000 from Drummond's bank, and £1,900 from Mr. William Field, an attorney of the Inner Temple, a gentleman with whom subsequently she had much to do. Rumours of her monetary difficulties had got about, and mixed with these rumours were others of a still more harassing nature. Whispers were heard that Miss Chudleigh was married, and had been married some years. Once more her name was in everybody's mouth.

While these rumours were current Elizabeth moved about in society perfectly undisturbed by the unpleasant stories which she knew quite well were being circulated. With the friendship of the King and Queen, and the support of the resolute Duchess of

Queensberry and other great ladies, she could afford to be indifferent to the gossip of Walpole and Lady Mary Coke. It may not have been that Walpole disliked her, or was actuated by malice in what he wrote, but it looks as if it were otherwise with Lady Mary Coke. Writing in her Journal on February 21st, 1768, she remarks: "I was engaged in the evening at a private party at Lady Charlotte Burgoyne's, where I lost six guineas. The Spanish Ambassadoress came from Miss Chudleigh's at Knightsbridge, where *she* said *she* had dined; it seems *she* [*i.e.* Miss Chudleigh] gave a great dinner to several of the foreigners, Lord and Lady Hertford, the Duchess of Portland, and some others," after which she winds up with the sarcastic comment, "who may not have company that will give a great dinner"—surely an unfair inference. Elizabeth had no need to give great dinners to attract women like Catherine Hyde, Duchess of Queensberry, and there must have been something original and piquant in Elizabeth to have drawn the equally original and piquant duchess so closely to her. The duchess at this time was getting on in years, but she was not less a law unto herself than in the days when she and the duke entertained their friends at Richmond; and she was a tower of strength to Elizabeth.

Judging by the numerous stories which had been told of the lady's whims and oddities she must have been at times a terrible trial to the duke. At one ball she gave at Richmond she had stuck up orders about dancing, as at public bowling-greens she turned half the company out at twelve, kept those she liked to supper, and, in short, contrived to "do an agreeable

thing in the rudest manner imaginable ; besides having dressed her husband in Scotch plaid, which just now is one of the things in the world that is reckoned most offensive," for it was immediately after the Scotch rebellion.

Nothing was too out of the way for her grace of Queensberry. While all the ladies of fashion were flaunting in their finery she went about in a white apron over her dress and her head enveloped in a white hood, indifferent to what her husband thought. Indeed, she "made the duke swallow all her undress." One day she drove to another lady of quality at Parsons Green, and told her that she was come to tell her something of importance. "What is it?" "Why, take a couple of beef-steaks, clap them together as if they were for a dumpling, and eat them with pepper and salt ; it is the best thing you ever tasted. I could not help coming to tell you this" ; and away she drove back to town.

She did not hesitate to be excessively rude if she felt that way inclined. On one occasion she told Lady Di Egerton, a pretty daughter of the Duchess of Bridgwater, that she was going to make a ball for her : she did, but did not invite her ! The girl was mortified, no wonder, and Mr. Lyttleton, her father-in-law, sent the mad grace a hint of it. She sent back this card : "The advertisement came to hand : it was very pretty and very ingenious ; but everything that is pretty and ingenious does not always succeed. The Duchess of Queensberry piques herself on her house not being unlike Socrates's : his was small and held all his friends ; hers is large, but will

not hold half of hers. Postponed, but not forgot : inalterable. Adieu !”

This was in 1751. In 1764 she was equally whimsical in her hospitalities. One ball that she gave she opened herself with a minuet, then she danced two country dances, apparently with the object of hurrying the proceedings, as she had enjoined everybody to be with her by six, to stop dancing at twelve, and to go away directly. The guests were invited according to her likes and dislikes. Of the Campbell sisters, all were left out but Lady Strafford. Lady Rockingham and Lady Sondes, having colds, deferred sending answers and were startled by receiving notice that their places were filled up, and that they must not come. However, they were pardoned on submission. A card was sent to invite Lord and Lady Cardigan, and Lord *Beaulieu*, instead of Lord Montagu—a most unfortunate blunder as Lord Beaulieu was the husband of Lady Cardigan’s sister, with whom she was on bad terms. This, her grace protested, was by accident. Lady Cardigan was very angry, and yet went. “Except these flights,” says Walpole, “the only extraordinary thing the duchess did was to do nothing extraordinary, for I do not call it very mad that, some pique happening between her and the Duchess of Bedford, the latter had this distich sent her :

Come with a whistle, and come with a call,
Come with a good will, or come not at all.”

Her grace’s eccentricity was constantly displaying itself in her odd ideas of dress, and the ladies of the Court must have lifted their eyes and hands when,

one Sunday in February 1765, she presented herself arrayed in a gown and petticoat of red flannel! The same day a French lady, Madame de Guercy, gave a dinner especially for her, and invited Lord and Lady Hyde, and her other particular friends. In the morning her grace sent word she was to go out of town, but as soon as dinner was over she arrived and calmly said she had been at Court. This kind of thing would seem to be more discourteous than eccentric.

George II. dispensed with the Queensberrys' attendance at Court, in consequence of their indiscreet patronage of Gay; but, as mentioned, they reappeared at the Coronation of George III. The morning after the ceremony the duchess sent for Miss Skaites and her other female attendants, and, scattering her court attire on the floor, exclaimed: "There, my good friends; I hope never to see another Coronation—so share it amongst you." She then sat down and assisted in ripping the point-lace, pearls, and other valuable ornaments off her discarded finery. The well-known fencing-master, Henry Angelo, in his "Reminiscences," gives an interesting picture of the couple: "I recollect," he writes, "the duchess in her formal dress, her long stomacher, point-lace apron, and her grey locks combed smoothly over her cushion; and the duke, a tall, lean, upright figure, with a shirt-skirted frock, gold-laced hat, and high leather gaiters." With all her faults the duchess had the redeeming quality of staunchness to her friends, as Elizabeth had reason to know.

CHAPTER XVIII

"Wilkes and Liberty"—Kissing at elections—Miss Chudleigh gives a ball during the disturbances in London—Rumours afloat concerning her secret marriage with Captain Hervey—Hervey reported about to sue for a divorce—The Court and leaders of Society are friendly towards Miss Chudleigh—Lady Mary Coke's malice—1767-8.

THE year 1768 was a time of trouble and turmoil. "Wilkes and Liberty" was the cry. A sentence of outlawry had been passed upon the sturdy politician in 1763 in consequence of his attack upon the King in the celebrated "No. 45" of *The North Briton*, and since then Wilkes had resided on the Continent. On the eve of the general election in 1768 he suddenly returned to London and offered himself as a candidate for the City. The mob received him enthusiastically, but at the poll he was defeated. Far from being dispirited by this defeat he immediately contested Middlesex, and here he was returned by a decisive majority.

One is tempted to speculate what part female influence played towards securing Wilkes his victory. A passage in a letter written by a candidate in this memorable general election is very instructive, and may be commended to the attention of the ardent

suffragettes of the present day : “I arrived here last night from Taunton,” writes this gentleman, “after a great deal of smocking, some drinking, and kissing some hundreds of women ; but it was to good purpose, for I made a great number of requisitions while I was there. I may venture to say that I have now near 150 majority.” Wilkes, it is pretty safe to say, did not neglect his opportunities of securing feminine support. He was, with the exception of Dr. Heidegger, the *entrepreneur* patronised by royalty, probably one of the ugliest men of his time ; but his manner was so fascinating and full of charm to the fair sex, he boasted that, give him but half an hour’s start, and he would not fear the handsomest man in England.

To whatever cause the success of Wilkes may have been due, the populace went wild over his victory and paraded the streets compelling the inhabitants to illuminate their houses. Most of the householders complied rather than have their windows stoned, but there was a notable exception in the case of the Duchess of Hamilton, the beautiful Elizabeth Gunning. She undauntedly faced the mob and refused to put a solitary candle in any of her windows, nor did she ; and she was let alone.

The story of that election, to use Mr. Evelyn Manner’s words, is considerably more than a thrice-told tale. The chariots and coaches were stopped, and chalked or scratched over window and panel with “No. 45,” while their inmates were forced to shout for “Wilkes and Liberty” ; the Austrian Ambassador was treated to a sort of “frog’s-march” with “45”

chalked upon the pathetically exposed soles of his shoes ; house-windows were demolished ; blue cockades were forcibly affixed to the hats of hordes of inwardly protesting wearers of Wilkes's badge, and these were but a few illustrations of the mob's humours which were matters of recorded history.

Lady Mary Coke was referring to the disturbance when she wrote in May 1768 : " The town, it seems, continues very unquiet. I received a note this morning from Lady Strafford full of melancholy apprehensions from all these bustles. . . . But Miss Chudleigh, willing to drive people's gloomy thoughts from these uneasy times, gives a great Ball this evening at her house in Knightsbridge." At this date, however, the election was two months old, and though the popular ferment had not subsided, rioting had ceased ; but on the polling day the inmates of Kingston House and Rutland House adjoining must have had an exciting experience. Knightsbridge was a specially busy scene of riot and faction-fight. The Brentford mob, coming eastwards, met there the London mob coming westwards ; heads and windows were broken with zealous profusion, and at a rate which left small time to waste in discrimination between friend and foe. Rutland House and its neighbour, Kingston House, were, at that moment, much beholden to the high railing which protected its frontage from the increased delirium derived by the crazy masses from frantic demonstration before Wilkes's neighbouring house in Kensington Gore. On the polling day the mob took possession of the western extremity of Piccadilly, and of all the turn-

pikes on the roads leading to Brentford. It does not appear, however, that the property either of the Kingstons or of their neighbour, the Marquis of Granby, suffered. No doubt the mob was in a hurry to reach the house of Lord Bute, who was an object of especial dislike.

By the summer months of 1768 the fact that Elizabeth, the maid of honour, was, and had been for some time a married woman was common talk ; and the scandal was of intense interest to the lady whose Journal furnishes so much interesting gossip. "I'll tell you an excellent speech of Miss Chudleigh's to Mrs. Anne Pitt, upon Lady Gower's marriage," she writes in July. "She said to her : 'Since Lady Susan Stewart has got a husband, I don't think any of us *old Maids* need despair.' 'Us old Maids !' Is not that charming ?"

By the following month matters reached a crisis, and there was no longer any necessity to preserve further secrecy. Lady Mary Coke and Horace Walpole race to be the first to publish the latest news in a crystalised form, and the lady wins. On August 6th we have this definite statement : "Mr. Augustus Hervey (I suppose at the desire of his brother, Lord Bristol), is going to prove his marriage as the first stage towards suing for being unmarried, and has sent the lady who goes by the name of Miss Chudleigh a letter to signify his intention ; to which she has returned this answer : That if he proves the marriage he will have sixteen thousand pounds to pay, as She owes that sum of money. As this answer is looked upon to be intended to stop the proceeding, every-

body is much surprised, as it was the general opinion that if She was at liberty the Duke of Kingston would marry her, which now seems to be doubtful."

The industrious letter-writer need not have been troubled to speculate over this legal point, as it turned out that Elizabeth had made no such conditions. Lady Mary Coke has the grace to contradict her former assertion, and writes on August 17th: "I am obliged sometimes to contradict in one Journal what I have mentioned in another. Mr. Hervey is really going to sue for a Divorce, but he told Lady Blandford that the answer which it was reported Mrs. Hervey had sent to his letter was an invention, for he had received none."

Horace Walpole follows suit, three days after: "Augustus Hervey, thinking it the *bel air*, is going to sue for a divorce from the Chudleigh. He asked Lord Bolingbroke, t'other day, who was his proctor, as he would have asked for his tailor. The nymph has sent him word that if he profess her his wife he must pay her debts, and she owes sixteen thousand pounds! This obstacle thrown in the way looks as if she was not sure of being Duchess of Kingston. The lawyers say it will be no valid plea; it not appearing that she was Hervey's wife, and therefore the tradesmen could not reckon on his paying them."

Lady Blandford seems to have been Captain Hervey's confidante, to the chagrin of Lady Mary Coke, who wrote "though he trusted her with all his proofs, She declared She would not tell us anything for fear it

might come to the knowledge of Miss Chudleigh, and be an advantage to her in her defence, for it seems She has retained Lawyers." But in spite of the scandal, the divorce and the grounds on which Captain Hervey meant to take action, the conjectures over the secret marriage, and a hundred other things ingenuity was certain to invent, Elizabeth went placidly on her way, and was not discredited in court circles, for when the buzz of gossip was at its height she attended the Princess-Dowager to the Queen's ball, and "danced in Company with their Majesties." "Such," remarks Lady Mary Coke sarcastically, "are the times." Elizabeth would, according to this statement, still be retaining her post as maid of honour—a pretty clear proof of the Dowager-Princess's attachment.

Later on in the year Lady Mary has occasion again to wonder at the favour shown to the audacious Chudleigh by the leaders of Society, who are by no means disposed to drop the lady of Kingston House, as the fair Journalist evidently thinks they ought to do. On October 2nd Elizabeth goes to the Princess's ball, where "the young Princess danced in Allemande and several Country dances, and where she play'd whist with the three Secretaries of State." This function drew no comment from the lively Lady Mary, perhaps because she thought what royalty chose to do was privileged and outside criticism; but she does not forget to express mild indignation at the tolerance of the Duchess of Northumberland four days later. "At Sion House," she records, "Lady Ailesbury asked me to play at Lu, which I willingly accepted,

but was a little surprised to find Miss Chudleigh one of the party." Evidently the recollection of the inclusion of Elizabeth in the "Lu" party rankled in her mind, for on October 13th Lady Mary, in a fit of spiteful morality, exclaims, through the medium of her Journal: "I make no doubt of Miss Chudleigh being Duchess of Kingston; infamy seems to prosper, while virtue appears under a cloud, neglected and oppressed." Maybe her irritation was accentuated by ill-luck at "Lu," for Lady Mary, as her Journal amply testifies, was an inveterate gambler.

As the year draws to a close the fair chronicler's indignation increases. The entertainment the rumoured divorce proceedings promised to give appeared as far off being realised as ever, and no doubt Lady Mary and hosts of others, eager to learn the inner history of the affair, and thirsting for "revelations," were terribly annoyed at Augustus Hervey's failure to gratify their curiosity. There was no longer talk of a divorce; in fact, the subject would appear to have been dropped on both sides, for neither Elizabeth nor Hervey made any sign. Writing evidently under a sense of disappointment, Lady Mary chronicles on November 10th: "Miss Chudleigh had a squib thrown into her Coach in returning home on Wednesday night, which set fire to a very fine lace ruffle, etc., as She says, burnt it, as also some part of the lining of her Coach. She made a long Story of it, as I was told at the Circle of Inquirers, and diverted all the Company." The phrase "Circle of Inquirers" demands explanation. It had nothing to do with

mediums or manifestations, as modern spiritualists, who use the same words to designate their séances, might suppose, but simply meant the assemblage of inquirers after the health of the Queen, Her Majesty being somewhat indisposed at the time.

Ten days later we get the following thoroughly feminine effusion: "Do tell Lord Strafford," the fair chronicler of gossip writes to a friend, "that Miss Chudleigh told the Company at St. James's one night last week that She was fifty years of age. So he may now call her Old Miss Chudleigh: 'twas the opinion of some that were present that she struck a few years. I shou'd not have been sorry had the squib that was thrown into her Coach had taken the direction Lord Strafford insisted. The prosperity of that Lady and of some others of equal merit will, I fear, be productive of bad consequences."

Lady Mary's pious fear of the result of Elizabeth's prosperity is very amusing. She no doubt held that the wicked should be punished and the virtuous rewarded, and had the squib only done its duty all would have been well. But somehow, in this best of all possible worlds, justice does not work out as, in the opinion of some people, it should.

Lady Mary and her friends were certainly unjust to Elizabeth in regard to one point—her age. She really over-estimated her years. At that time she was but forty-eight at the very outside. If Mr. Baring Gould is right in his conjecture that she was born in 1726, she would have been but forty-two, but for reasons already stated this can hardly have been

so. It is quite possible that Elizabeth, in 1768, looked older than she really was. She was going through a period of considerable doubt and anxiety, and at that moment, unknown to her fair critics, was meditating an audacious coup, which was to free her from the consequences of her fated midnight marriage. The distasteful fact must also be remembered that if Whitehead, the duke's valet, is to be believed, she habitually over-ate herself. "There is no keeping off age by sticking roses and sweet-peas in one's hair, as Miss Chudleigh does still," wrote Walpole in July of the previous year, and a passage in one of the Grenville papers is also significant. "I cannot conclude the Gazette," one of the letter-writers says, "without informing you that the Duchess of Kingston was presented [at Court] in an embroidery of orient pearl, which, she told us, cost nothing. As your old acquaintance, Madame de Viri, stood near her, she appeared a slim, genteel figure." The pronouns are somewhat mixed, but there is little doubt that the reference to the stout lady is intended for Elizabeth. Indeed, from a coarse comparison made by Walpole, it would seem that for the previous five years her figure had been showing a tendency to develop beyond the limits of symmetrical beauty. But, in spite of changes in her looks, she was still able to "divert all the company," and this was the immense advantage she had over ladies younger and handsomer. One can imagine the satisfaction the newly made Duchess felt in being able to announce that her embroidered gown "cost nothing." It is a very characteristic touch of what was Elizabeth's

chief failing—a delight in economy which amounted to meanness.

This letter somewhat anticipates events. It was written in the early part of 1769, soon after her marriage, as the result of the jactitation suit, and shows that her elevation to the rank of a peeress made no difference to her ruling passion.

CHAPTER XIX

Elizabeth Chudleigh with the Duke of Kingston at Pierrepont Lodge, Surrey, and Thoresby, Nottinghamshire—She determines to throw in her lot with the duke and get her marriage with Captain Hervey annulled—The confusing misstatements of biographers—Her secret negotiations with her husband—The distinguished career of Captain Hervey in the French War—The spite of the Grub Street writers—1768.

IT was fortunate, perhaps, for Elizabeth's peace of mind that from the date of the birth of her child England was continually at war, thus keeping Captain Hervey out of the country for long periods at a time. Had it not been so it would have been difficult for him to avoid meeting his wife at home, as they moved in the same circles. During the year 1762 he was engaged in the capture of the Havannah, and in October of that year news was brought to his mother, Lady Hervey (the lively Molly Lepel of the early days of George II.), that he had greatly distinguished himself, and that, on his way home, he had taken a rich French ship going to Newfoundland with military stores.

It was worth while in those days being in command, either in the Navy or Army. Lord Albemarle, who was leader of the Havannah expedition, got for his

share of the prize-money no less than £140,000, and no doubt the rich French ship proved a treasure-ship to the Hon. Augustus. Soon after he was appointed captain-commandant in the Mediterranean, and we read of him in 1763 taking a tour in the Mediterranean with the Duke of York. But all this time he made not the slightest attempt to approach his wife. He let her severely alone, and few suspected the close link that existed between them.

Meanwhile Elizabeth was observing great discretion. She certainly brought no scandal upon the Duke of Kingston, but it is pretty certain she visited him at his houses in the country. One of these country houses was Clinton Lodge, in the neighbourhood of Frensham. In Bray's "History of Surrey" the estate is described as originally called "Tanker's Ford," and was a "farm" of about three hundred acres, being copyhold held of the Manors of Farnham and Frensham Beale. It was purchased in 1748 of Mr. John Mabank by the Hon. Colonel John Mordaunt, brother to the Earl of Peterborough, who added to the buildings and formed it into a small villa. In 1753 he sold it to Henry Read (as trustee of the Earl of Lincoln, afterwards Duke of Newcastle), and in 1760 it was sold to the Duke of Kingston, who enlarged the buildings, purchased other lands, and made it into a pleasant *ferme ornée*. From him it had the name of "Pierrepont" Lodge. The duke sold the estate in 1771 to Mr. Ascanius Senior; and as Elizabeth had taken a fancy to Thoresby, the duke's ancestral home, near Sherwood Forest, in Nottinghamshire, the last years of his life were mostly spent there.

It will be noticed that the Duke of Kingston's family name is variously spelt. We have "Pierrepont," "Pierrepoint," and "Pierpont." The "Dictionary of National Biography" has "Pierrepont," and we may take it this is correct. In quoting authorities, however, we have followed the original spellings.

The author of "The History of Notts," published in 1797, draws a quaint picture of Thoresby. He says: "The seat of Charles Pierpont, Esq., is seated near Olleston, in Sherwood Forest, in a park thirteen miles round. The present edifice has no splendid attractions, at a distance, to fix the eye alone on that object. At least, brick buildings as country mansions are destitute of harmony and elegance; in them there is no sweet combination with water, foliage, or the earth's surface—in towns 'tis very different. Convenient as a bulky square may be for internal accommodation, when of brick, standing in a park, it gives us no idea agreeable with grandeur or what is noble. Near, however, the magnitude of this seat, the richness of the window-frames are overlaid with gold, glittering in the sunshine, the deer and numerous servants in gay liveries busied in their various offices bespeak a dwelling of rank and dignity.

"This house stands unadorned, near it with groves and plantations, but there is a fine sheet of water, bearing vessels *of no great burthen*, but richly ornamental; their little streamers, wafted by the wind, have a pleasing effect. Hence, at a distance, all nature seems a pleasure-garden; lawns and woody objects present themselves in pleasing succession; and as you travel they pass, as it were, in pleasing review."



LADY TOWNSHEND

The writer infinitely prefers the building which was burnt down in 1745 when a large number of priceless MSS. were destroyed, many of them relating to the Parliamentary war of the Commonwealth, the original owner of the documents having been one of the leading members of the House of Commons during the Civil War. Among these were consumed the minutes and papers relating to the treaties with Charles I. at Uxbridge and the Isle of Wight. Neale, in his "Views of Seats," tells us that "the first of this family who was seated here was William, second son of Robert Pierpont, created, in 1627, Baron Pierpont, of Holme Pierpont (a lordship which came into the family by a marriage with a sister and heir of Lionel de Manvers, *temp.* Henry III.) and Viscount Newark, and the year following was advanced to the dignity of Earl of Kingston. The grandson of William became the first Duke of Kingston in 1715, and resided here."

It is noticeable that none of the topographical writers on Nottinghamshire make any mention of Elizabeth, although she was by far the most interesting personage connected with the place, excepting Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who was a Pierrepont, and who was born in the mansion connected with Thoresby. There was a reason for this silence. Elizabeth was regarded as an impostor by the Medows's side of the family, who, after the result of the bigamy trial, entered into possession of the estate and who, no doubt, hated the ex-duchess cordially. The topographers of the day, who could only publish their works with the assistance of subscribers, were not likely

to write anything calculated to annoy their noble patrons.

The disturbance caused by the intrusion of the little milliner having subsided in due course, as was the fashion in those easy days, harmony was once more restored at Thoresby and Kingston House, so much so that about this time (1767) Elizabeth began to formulate new plans. The Earl of Bristol persisted in remaining in this world, and, so far as one could tell, was likely to continue in the same mind and body, and Elizabeth gradually gave up ideas of ever becoming Countess of Bristol. The Duke of Kingston had renewed his allegiance, and, had she been free, would have married her at once. The problem that faced her was how to get free. The solution taxed Elizabeth's ingenuity to the utmost, and eventually she found a way of surmounting the difficulty.

Elizabeth's biographers have put forward various stories as to what happened at this crisis. One writer says: "Her morning meditations, her nightly thoughts, were now employed in contriving means to procure a dissolution of her marriage bond. Lawyers were consulted, but no means could be devised except that of proving adultery against their fair client. So unpleasant a procedure was of course rejected, not so much on account of the sin as the risk and exposure. Mr. Hervey might have sat down contented, and his wife could not have taken benefit of her own wrong. Public disgrace without private relief would have been the probable consequence. Time, however, brought about an opportunity on which female ingenuity

instantly seized. The clergyman who performed the marriage ceremony having passed away, it appeared, upon inquiry, that the parish register-book was not in cautious hands. An inspection was requested, for which a handsome bribe having been given, the clerk suffered himself to be amused on one side of the vestry while Mrs. Hervey dexterously tore from the book the leaf which contained the record of her marriage, and, depositing it in her bosom, conveyed it home, where it was committed to the flames, never more to rise in evidence. By this exploit Mrs. Hervey considered herself absolved from those sacred vows she had made to her husband at the altar, and at liberty to receive the addresses and the hand of the first lover she should approve. But, Mr. Hervey being succeeded to the earldom of Bristol, his rank and fortune became serious objects of acquisition, and when succession to the family honours and revenues of her husband became probable, she seriously repented her rashness in destroying the written records of her marriage. The title and fortune were objects to her ambition and avarice, and she resolved, if possible, to re-establish her claim to both. For this purpose she took a journey to Mr. Merrill's, under pretence of paying that gentleman a friendly visit, but in reality to procure the reinsertion of her marriage with Mr. Hervey in the register-book, and for this purpose took with her an attorney in whom she had long confided.

"The officiating clerk was easily worked upon, money was given, and a promotion promised. The book was managed by the lady to her perfect satis-

faction, and her spirits were so elevated on the occasion that she opened her heart to the clergyman's wife, informed her of the birth and death of her child by Mr. Hervey, and told her that the proof she had now obtained might be a hundred thousand pounds in her way."

All this is misleading, confusing, and inaccurate, and the wild mingling of dates and circumstances makes the story altogether worthless. It would be a waste of time to correct the inconsistencies. The solitary fact with which we are concerned is the story of Elizabeth's visit to the vestry of Lainston Church in order to tear the leaf out of the register. The register prepared at Winchester with the assistance of the attorney Spearing was never in the custody of the clerk—indeed, there is considerable doubt whether a clerk existed in Lainston parish, with its one or two houses. As already mentioned, the register was in the possession of Mr. Merrill. Mr. Merrill died in February 1767, and after this date "the register was forgotten," to quote the words of the Solicitor-General at the trial. It is very clear, therefore, that Elizabeth did not go to Lainston in 1767, that she did not trouble about the register, and consequently never attempted to tamper with it. The story of tearing the leaf from the register is pure invention, as will be subsequently shown.

What the precise arrangement she made with the Hon. Augustus was it is quite impossible to say, but that she opened negotiations with him may be taken as a certainty. Rumours were afterwards

current that it was a question of money—in other words, that she bribed him to work with her in untying the matrimonial knot ; but there is no evidence of this, nor is it likely to have been the case. Augustus Hervey did not require to be bribed. He was no longer the impecunious lieutenant of 1744, but had had a good share of prize-money from time to time, and the pay he drew from his position in the Navy was not inconsiderable. Moreover—and this is the most powerful argument against the supposition that Elizabeth bribed him—he was in love with a lady at Bath, the daughter of a fashionable physician, and was as anxious as his wife to sever the marriage tie.

How it happened that rumours began to spread that Elizabeth was married, and that her husband was the Hon. Augustus Hervey, is of no importance, but such rumours were current. The odd thing is that the news caused no ferment in Society, which apparently would go to show that the secret had not been so well kept as Elizabeth imagined. As early as March 1765 we have Gilly Williams writing to George Selwyn that “report says Lord Bristol is dying at Bath ; if so, between the new earl and the Countess of Bristol the town will not want diversion for some time.” This was a plain and positive assertion, showing that already it was being more than whispered that the Hon. Augustus Hervey, the hero of the Havannah, had a wife, and a wife who was no other than the Dowager-Princess's favourite maid of honour, Elizabeth Chudleigh. However it may have come about, the subject by degrees began to be freely discussed, and, from the

nature of the legal proceedings afterwards instituted by Elizabeth, it was most likely Captain Hervey who set the ball rolling. Indeed, had he not done so, that curious and antiquated process in ecclesiastical law known as "jactitation of marriage," to which recourse was had in the early part of 1769, could hardly have been sustained.

The silence of Augustus Hervey for so many years and the complete indifference he showed towards his wife and her doings were, as we have surmised, accounted for by the fact that for the greater part of the time he was away fighting the French in various parts of the world. Hervey was a gallant sailor, brave to recklessness, and his career was one which ought to have made him acceptable to an adventurous woman ; but Elizabeth, for reasons which she kept to herself, and which have never been satisfactorily explained, would have nothing to do with him, and, as already related, it was only when her material interests were concerned that she troubled herself about the legality of her marriage.

The incidents of Hervey's stirring life are worth reading. On September 16th, 1746, the young lieutenant was promoted to the command of the sloop *Porcupine*, and was employed as a cruiser, with the result that he captured off Cherbourg a small French privateer, the *Bacquer Court*. Cruising about in the Channel, he had plenty of opportunities for hurried visits to London, and most of these visits were with the object of seeing his wife. In the following January he was appointed a post-captain in the Navy, and promoted to the command of the *Princessa*, a third-rate of

70 guns which had been taken from the Spaniards, The fitting out of this ship probably occupied some weeks, and, while waiting until she was ready for sea. Captain Hervey spent the time in Conduit Street with his wife. The result was the birth of his son in November. In the *Princessa* and in the *Phœnix* of 24 guns Hervey served in the Mediterranean under Admirals Medley and Byng. While in the latter vessel, in April 1756 he was despatched by the Hon. George Edgcumbe, the Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean squadron, from Villa Franca to England with the earliest intimation of the sailing of the French fleet from Toulon to Minorca. He joined Byng off Majorca on May 17th, and patriotically offered to convert his ship, if necessary, into a fireship, but the change was not considered desirable. Hervey took part in Byng's indecisive engagement, and when Captain Andrews was slain in the action was promoted to his place in the *Defiance*, of 64 guns. He was ordered home as a witness at Byng's trial, and on its conclusion, being advanced to the command of the *Hampton Court*, was sent back to his former station, where he distinguished himself (July 1757) by driving the *Nymph*, a French frigate of 32 guns, on the rocks off Majorca, and, on a refusal to surrender, sinking her.

In February 1758, when on the same station, he fell in with the little squadron of the Marquis du Quesne, but was not fortunate enough to get to close quarters with the enemy until Captain Gardiner had attacked and captured the *Foudroyant*. As the captain was slain in the contest, Hervey removed to his vessel, the

Monmouth, and in the following July burnt the *Rose*, a French frigate of 36 guns, off the island of Malta, a proceeding of which its inhabitants complained as an insult to their neutrality. During Hawke's operations in the Channel in the summer of 1757, "Hervey and Keppel were the eyes and hands of the fleet," and both secured their chief's enthusiastic commendation. As Commodore, he watched the French fleet in Brest, and in the sight of twenty ships of the line in that harbour gallantly cut off with his boats some of the enemy's vessels that were seeking its shelter. On September 28th in that year he again distinguished himself by rowing at night in the *Monmouth's* barge, in company with four other boats, into the harbour, and carrying off a little yacht belonging to the French admiral. Though a shot passed through his coat, he was not wounded, and he won the gratitude of the sailors who supported him by surrendering to them his share of the prize and head-money. With this in-shore work off Brest the *Monmouth* was so worn out that Hervey was obliged to come home, and thus experienced the mortification of missing his lawful share in Hawke's victory of Quiberon (November 1759). By the way of reward he was appointed in the spring of 1760 to command the *Dragon*, a new ship of 74 guns. He now served under Keppel at Belleisle, when he made an unsuccessful attempt to seize the isle of Groa, near Quiberon.

In the autumn of 1761 Hervey was ordered to proceed with Commodore Barton to the West Indies to join Rodney in his expedition against the French island of Martinico. There he aided in the success-

ful attack and was afterwards ordered by Rodney to proceed in the *Dragon*, with five other vessels, to demand the surrender of St. Lucia. The island was at once given up (February 1762). An expedition, the naval part of which was under the direction of Sir George Pocock, had sailed from England against the Havannah, and this was joined by a portion, including Hervey's ship, of the fleet previously under Rodney's command. Hervey captured the castle which defended the river Caximar, and at Keppel's direction, under whose immediate command he now acted, hastened to cannonade with three other vessels from the seaward the fort of Moro Castle, which commanded the entrance to the harbour of the Havannah. He had the misfortune to be grounded, but persevered in firing until ordered to desist, when his ship was obliged to withdraw in order to be refitted. After a terrible loss of life Moro Castle was taken nearly a month later, and the Havannah was soon afterwards surrendered. Hervey was despatched to England with the news, and on his way, as previously mentioned, captured a large French frigate laden with military stores for Newfoundland, which the enemy had a short time before made a descent upon. Peace quickly followed, when Hervey resigned his command and accepted the captaincy of the *Centurion*, of 50 guns, under the Duke of York.

After the West Indian campaign Hervey retired from the sea, and between 1763 and 1768 was variously occupied with parliamentary business, representing Saltash in 1763 and Bury in 1768 (a seat he occupied until 1775, when he succeeded to the

peerage), with his duties as colonel of the Plymouth division of marines, and with his post in the Mediterranean as already mentioned. Gradually, however, his occupation led him to be more in London, especially when in 1766 he was appointed secretary to his brother, then Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. With all these changes the position of affairs in regard to his wife became altered. The two were constantly crossing each other's paths and the embarrassment was mutual, especially as the secret of the relations between them was gradually becoming no secret at all. No wonder that the same problem occupied the minds of both—how to secure their freedom.

What the author of "An Authentic Detail" has to say about the jactitation suit and the events which led up to it is worth quoting, not because his account gives one the slightest piece of information, for his version is both inaccurate and ridiculous, but because it is a fair sample of the venomous spirit in which all Elizabeth's biographers indulged. The "Authentic Detail" says, with the Johnsonian solemnity and the affected zeal on behalf of morality and virtue which characterised so much of the literature produced at the end of the eighteenth century: "Thus conditioned was Miss Chudleigh when the Duke of Kingston became her admirer. Remarried, as it were, by her own stratagem, the participation of ducal honours became legally impossible. The chains of wedlock, which the lady had been so industrious in shaking off, or putting on, as seemed most promotive of her avarice, were now galling to an excess. Every

advice was taken, without the means of liberation being in the power of human device to suggest. To acquiesce in that which could not be remedied seemed the *dernier ressort*. The Duke of Kingston's attachment was ardent and truly sincere. He mingled the friend with the lover; nor was there an endearing title under heaven he would not have assumed could but the assumption have advanced the happiness of Miss Chudleigh. For a series of years they cohabited, yet with such observance of external decorum that, although their intimacy was a moral, it was not an evidenced, certainty. That the felicity of the duke was in any means promoted by this union cannot be asserted consistently with truth. The parties were diametrically opposite characters. The duke was mild, gracious, unassuming, and bashful in the extreme. He had every grace requisite in a man of rank. Ostentation he so much detested that it was his custom, in perambulating the streets, to fold back the front of his coat so as to hide the Star; and whenever by accident it was discovered, the disclosure caused an involuntary blush. His lady possessed very different qualities. In vociferating anger she could fairly boast an alliance with Juno. Ostentatious she was to an excess, and so little sublimed were her feelings that the grossest flattery was an animating cordial to her spirits. It revived her when more rational succours failed of effect. Thus contrarily gifted and disposed, the duke and Miss Chudleigh were frequently on discordant terms; but she had a strong hold on his mind, and the use she made of it was finally to ruin herself. The Earl of

Bristol by time and attachments had grown so weary of his connubial state as to be cordially desirous of a change. At first, when sounded on the subject of a divorce, he had used this expression : 'I will see the —— at the devil before her vanity shall be gratified by being a duchess.' Afterwards, however, there being a lady to whom he wished to offer his hand, he so altered his tone as to express a readiness to consent to any possible means of annihilating the union subsisting between him and Miss Chudleigh. The civilians were consulted, and a jactitation suit was instituted."

It is difficult to understand why the Grub Street writers attacked Elizabeth Chudleigh with such virulence. Her irregularity of life hardly approached that of Lady Townshend, Lady Caroline Petersham, Fanny Bury, the notorious Kitty Fisher, and other ladies of pleasure ; she did not fatten on public money after the fashion of Mesdames Schulemburg and Kielmansegge, the female importations of the first George, and in a lesser degree the Walmoden of his son ; she was not so much a byword as Lady Archie Hamilton and Lady Middlesex, yet whenever the scribblers wrote concerning her they dipped their pens in gall. Their carelessness, their blunders and scurrilities, would not perhaps matter had not their effusions been accepted and adopted by subsequent writers. A case in point is that of the editor of the "Nottingham Date Book," published in 1852, who in chronicling the Newark Races of July 1763, which Miss Chudleigh attended accompanied by the Duke of Kingston, and possibly stayed at the duke's house

in Stoney Street, Nottingham, adds the following in a footnote: "Captain Hervey, wishing to marry another lady, applied to his wife to sue for a divorce, but this she steadfastly refused, asserting that she could, at any time she thought proper, be either Duchess of Kingston or Countess of Bristol. After considerable practice upon him, the Duke of Kingston publicly married her on March 8th, 1769, and the history of her life, both before and after this period, is little better than a disgusting record of tyranny and debauchery. A year after her marriage she came to the duke's seat at Holme Pierrepont, near the town; but, it is stated, she only stayed there one day, alleging the gloominess of the place, and the adjacency of the churchyard, as a sufficient cause for disliking it. The duke, after suffering many indignities and disgraces through the duchess, died on September 22nd, 1773." The only excuse for this piece of exaggeration is that the editor might have had access to the letters of Whitehead, the duke's valet, and accepted everything this individual, who was Miss Chudleigh's sworn enemy, chose to invent.

An explanation of the ill-nature and spite of the early biographies may perhaps be found in the fact that, as they were published after the news arrived in London of the death of the "Duchess" in Paris, they were "rushed," and the writers purposely made their narratives as strong as possible in order to satisfy the public's greed for "revelations." Accuracy of detail and attention to dates were of no importance since there was little chance of contradiction. There

is ample reason to believe that Elizabeth did not deserve the obloquy cast upon her, and that throughout the circumstances which brought her within the pale of the law she acted in concert with her husband, and that both conscientiously believed their marriage was dissolved.

CHAPTER XX

Elizabeth commences a suit for "jactitation of marriage" against her husband—A cumbrous legal proceeding—Captain Hervey's defence—No witnesses of the marriage produced—The Court pronounces in favour of Elizabeth, and condemns Captain Hervey in costs—1768-9.

THE month of November 1768 was a specially momentous one for Elizabeth Hervey. On the 9th, the day before the squib was thrown into her coach, the plot she and the Hon. Augustus Hervey had been elaborating with so much care and secrecy, with the assistance of their legal advisers, came to a head, and the fashionable world was thrown into a ferment by the news, not that Captain Hervey had commenced a suit for divorce, as they expected and hoped, but that Miss Chudleigh had made use of an antiquated and cumbrous legal process to get rid of her superfluous husband. This process was known as "jactitation of marriage," and we can imagine hosts of fine ladies inquiring what the term meant. As probably it is equally unintelligible to the majority of people to-day, we may be pardoned for giving the explanation as it is set forth in "Chambers's Encyclopædia." Jactitation of marriage, according to this authority, is a false pretence of being married to another—a

wrong for which the party injured could formerly obtain redress of a suit in the Ecclesiastical Court. The suit is unknown in modern practice, the English law being clear enough to enable parties to ascertain without litigation whether they are married or not. In Scotland, where the law is not so clear, the suit of declaration of putting to silence (*i.e.* putting an end to pretended claims) answers the same purpose as a suit for jactitation.

This, then, was the process to which Miss Chudleigh had recourse, and it is obvious that to succeed she would have to prove that the ceremony at Lainston, if it took place at all, did not constitute a marriage, and that if Captain Hervey asserted that it did he was guilty of libel and perjury. On November 10th the suit was commenced, and, clumsy and prolix as the legal formula is, we give certain portions *in extenso* as upon the suit and its result grave issues depended. Had the judgment been the reverse of what it was Elizabeth would certainly never have defied the law by knowingly committing bigamy. The steps she took—in combination with her husband, as we contend—might be questioned, but she was not rash, neither was she a fool, and there is every reason to think that when she married the Duke of Kingston she conscientiously believed that she was legally entitled to do so. As will be seen when the trial for bigamy comes to be considered, the whole charge against the duchess, as she claimed to be, rested on this jactitation suit. The report of the proceedings commences in this fashion :

“In the name of God, Amen. Before you, the worshipful John Bettesworth, doctor of laws, vicar-



JOHN STUART, EARL OF BUTE

general of the right reverend father in God, Richard, by divine permission, lord bishop of London, and official principal of the consistorial and episcopal court of London lawfully constituted, your surrogate or any other competent judge in this behalf of the proctor of the honourable Elizabeth Chudleigh, of the parish of St. Margaret, Westminster, in the County of Middlesex and diocese of London, a bachelor ; and against any other person or persons lawfully intervening or appearing for him in judgment before you by way of complaint, and hereby complaining unto you in this behalf, doth say, alledge, and in law articulately propound as follows ; that is to say—

“That the said Honourable Elizabeth Chudleigh was and is free, and no way engaged in any matrimonial contract or espousals with the said Honourable Augustus John Hervey ; and for and as a person free and no way engaged, was and is commonly accounted, reputed, and taken to be amongst neighbours, friends and familiar acquaintances : and the party proponent doth alledge and propound everything in this article contained jointly and severally.

“That the said honourable Augustus John Hervey, sufficiently knowing the premises, and notwithstanding the same, did in the year of our Lord 1763-4-5-6 and 1767 and in several months therein concurring, and in this present year of our Lord 1768, within the parish of St. James, Westminster, aforesaid, and in other parishes and places in the neighbourhood thereof, and thereto adjoining, or in all, some, or one of the aforementioned time and places, in the presence of several credible witnesses falsely and maliciously boast, assert,

and report that he was married to or contracted in marriage with the aforesaid honourable Elizabeth Chudleigh ; whereas in truth and fact not any such marriage was ever solemnized or ever contracted between them ; and this was and is true, public and notorious ; and the party proponent doth alledge and propound of any other time or times and places as shall appear from the proofs to be made in this cause, and as before.

“ That the said honourable Augustus John Hervey hath been often times or at least once, on the part and behalf of the said honourable Elizabeth Chudleigh, and her friends and acquaintance, asked and requested, or desired to desist and abstain from his aforesaid pretended false and malicious boasting, asserting and reporting, as mentioned in the next preceding article : and the party proponent doth alledge and propound as before :

“ That the said Hon. Augustus John Hervey being as aforesaid asked and requested to cease, desist, and abstain from his aforesaid pretended false and malicious boasting, asserting and reporting, hath not in the least, nor doth in the least at present cease, desist and abstain therefrom, but continually with like malice and rashness does constantly, falsely and maliciously boast, assert, affirm, and report the same, to the great danger of his soul's health, no small prejudice to the said honourable Elizabeth Chudleigh, and pernicious example of others : and this was and is true, public, and notorious : and the party proponent doth alledge and propound as before.

“ That of all and singular the premises it was and

is, by and on the part and behalf of the said honourable Elizabeth Chudleigh, spinster, thinking herself greatly injured, aggrieved, and disquieted by reason of the aforesaid pretended false and malicious boasting, asserting, and reporting of the said honourable Augustus John Hervey, rightly and duly complained to the judge aforesaid, and to this Court, for a fit and meet remedy to be had and provided in this behalf.

“That in the year 1743 Elizabeth Chudleigh was admitted a maid of honour to H.R.H. the Princess of Wales; and on the death of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales on the 17th of April 1751, readmitted and continued maid of honour to the Princess Dowager of Wales, without any let or hindrance of the right honourable Augustus Hervey and during the whole of the time continues and still continues a maid of honour, without any let or hindrance of the right honourable John Augustus Hervey: And this was and is true; and so much Augustus Hervey knows and believes to be true.

“That in the year 1753 Elizabeth Chudleigh in her own name as a spinster, and without any let or hindrance of Augustus Hervey, took a lease of the right honourable lord Berkeley of Stratton of certain land in Hill Street in the parish of St. George Hanover Square whereon Elizabeth Chudleigh built a house wherein she lived for five years and afterwards sold the same to Hugo Meynell esq.; and received the money from the sale, putting it to her own use.

“That on the 3rd of February 1757, Elizabeth Chudleigh spinster was admitted a copyholder and tenant to the dean and chapter of Westminster for

the house and land, or some part thereof, where she now lives, at Knightsbridge, Middlesex, in her own (then and now) maiden name of Elizabeth Chudleigh, and without Augustus Hervey being a party or in any way concerned.

“That in the year 1762 Elizabeth Chudleigh transacted business with John Butcher in her own maiden name of Chudleigh, and took a lease from Mr. Butcher of certain lands in the parish of Kensington Middlesex, and this without Augustus Hervey being a party or in any way concerned, and in such lease, the said Elizabeth Chudleigh was described by the name of Elizabeth Chudleigh.

“That Mrs. Ann Hanmer, aunt of Elizabeth Chudleigh, is pretended to have been present at the pretended marriage, did in the year 1762 write a letter to Elizabeth Chudleigh, wherein she addresses her as a single woman—calling her ‘dear Mrs. Chudleigh’—and also in the year following made her last will and testament bearing the date 11th of June 1763 (and codicil, not dated), proved in the prerogative court of Canterbury, wherein she gave a silver sugar urn and spoon, and by her codicil, a legacy of £100 to the Honourable ‘Mrs. Elizabeth Chudleigh.’” (The letter above referred to was written from Sunning Hill, August 14th, 1762, and ended in the formal and ceremonious style of the times: “I am, dear Madam, your sincere well-wisher and humble servant, A. HANMER.”)

“That Mr. Merrill, at whose house the said right honourable Augustus John Hervey hath pleaded the pretended marriage to have been solemnized, wrote

two letters and sent them by post to Elizabeth Chudleigh, wherein he addresses her as a single woman; the letters being dated November 1st 1756 and November 3rd 1765, written in one sheet of paper and directed thus: 'To the Honourable Mrs. Elizabeth Chudleigh at Chalmington, near Dorchester, Dorset,' and in the letter of November 3rd 1765 are these words: 'I have added your Christian name to your surname in the direction of this, lest the word honourable should not be sufficient to prevent a blunder, and the letter should be given to Mrs. Chudleigh. I have met with so many and such gross blunders, that I think I can never enough guard against them'—and the party proponent doth alledge that by the words 'should be given to Mrs. Chudleigh' was meant Mrs. Chudleigh, at Chalmington, aunt to Elizabeth Chudleigh. . . . That the said Mr. Merrill hath also by his last will and testament (dated 1st January 1767) given and bequeathed legacies to Elizabeth Chudleigh.

"That in the year 1766, Elizabeth Chudleigh borrowed of Mr. John Drummond, a banker, at divers times, on mortgage and bond security in her own name (and without the right honourable Augustus Hervey being concerned in any way) the sum of £5,160 and gave Mr. Drummond a bond for £1,000 part thereof in her maiden name (Elizabeth Chudleigh), and also mortgaged certain premises situate in the manor of Knightsbridge, in the County of Middlesex, for the repayment of the sum of £4,160 to the said Mr. Drummond.

"That in the month of February 1765, and in June

1768, Elizabeth Chudleigh borrowed of Mr. William Field of the Inner Temple, Attorney at law, several sums of money, to the amount of £1,900 for which she gave to Mr. Field, as security, two bonds in her own name (Elizabeth Chudleigh) without the right hon. Augustus Hervey being concerned in any way.

“That on the 25th February 1756 administration of the goods, chattels and credits of Harriet Chudleigh, late of Windsor Castle, widow, deceased, the mother of Elizabeth Chudleigh, was granted to the said William Field, as the attorney and for the use and benefit of Elizabeth Chudleigh (spinster), natural and lawful daughter and only child of the said Harriet Chudleigh deceased.

“That the said Mr. William Field as the attorney of Elizabeth Chudleigh, and by virtue of a letter of attorney from her for that purpose, used to receive her salary as maid of honour without the right hon. Augustus Hervey being concerned in any way.

“That on the 5th of May 1766 Elizabeth Chudleigh presented in her own name (Elizabeth Chudleigh) by virtue of a presentation signed by her for that purpose, the reverend Mr. John Julian, junior to the living of Hartford, in the county of Devon, who was duly instituted and inducted to the said living, without the right hon. Augustus Hervey, etc. etc.

“That Elizabeth Chudleigh for many years subsequent to the time of the pretended marriage kept a current account of cash with the Bank of England in her name of Elizabeth Chudleigh, and as a single woman; and also in all common as well as other occurrences of buyings and sellings and other money

matters, Elizabeth Chudleigh hath, as well before as ever since the time of the pretended marriage, constantly in her own name of Elizabeth Chudleigh, spinster, transacted business, hiring and discharging servants without the right hon. Augustus Hervey, etc. etc."

The defence of the Hon. Augustus Hervey to this formidable indictment, put forward on his behalf by his proctor, Mr. Fountain, is couched in similar legal jargon. The gist of Captain Hervey's defence is that "some time in the year 1743 or 1744, having conceived a liking and affection for the said Elizabeth Chudleigh, and being a bachelor and a minor of the age of seventeen or eighteen years, and free from any matrimonial contact, did privately make his addresses of love and courtship to the said Elizabeth Chudleigh who was then also a minor and a spinster of the age of about eighteen years, and also free from any matrimonial contract, and she, the said Elizabeth Chudleigh, now Hervey, did receive and admit such his addresses and courtship, and entertain him as a suitor in the way of marriage."

It is quite obvious that these statements are made purposely inaccurate. In 1744 Elizabeth was neither eighteen nor a minor. As already shown, she was at the time of her marriage of the mature age of twenty-four. Neither was Hervey seventeen or eighteen years of age. He was born on May 19, 1724, and was consequently in his twenty-first year on August 4th, 1744. No doubt it was assumed that both the parties being minors, there would be all the more reason for

regarding the marriage as one that might be reasonably dissolved. But the misstatement of ages is not the only noticeable point in the defence. A much more important feature is that it deliberately asserted that which was not true. The details relating to the marriage ceremony are told fairly enough, but an important omission is noticeable. The only witnesses named are Mrs. Hanmer and Mr. Amis, "both since deceased," Anne Cradock, who was still alive, is not mentioned as being present at the marriage, neither are Mr. and Mrs. Merrill. The defence goes on to state that after the two were married "they consummated such their marriage at the said Mr. Merrill's house . . . but without the privity or knowledge of any part of the family and servants of the said Mr. Merrill." Was this so? What about Anne Cradock? If anybody could have settled the matter to the satisfaction of "the worshipful John Bettesworth, doctor of laws, vicar general of the right reverend father in God, Richard, by divine permission Lord Bishop of London and official principal of the consistorial episcopal court of London," Miss Cradock was the very person. The Hon. Augustus could have called her had he chosen, and he would not have had the least difficulty in producing her, for at that moment she was married to one of his servants. But of course Captain Hervey had no intention of doing anything of the kind. He had the young lady at Bath in his mind, and he was as anxious as Elizabeth herself to be released from the chains of matrimony.

It is very clear the Consistorial Episcopal Court was not concerned about making minute inquiries.

It accepted the statements of both parties, judged between them, took its time to deliberate, and on February 10th, 1769, the sentence was "read and promulgated," the Court deciding in favour of the lady, and adding that the "said Augustus John Hervey ought by law to be condemned in lawful expenses made or to be made in this cause on the part and behalf of the said honourable Elizabeth Chudleigh, to be paid to the said Elizabeth Chudleigh or her proctor, and accordingly we do condemn him in such expenses which we tax at and moderate to the sum of £100 of lawful money of Great Britain besides the expenses of a monition for payment on this behalf by this our definitive sentence or final decree which we read and promulge by these presents."

At last, so Elizabeth fondly imagined, she was really and truly free.

CHAPTER XXI

Elizabeth free to marry the Duke of Kingston—Rumours of collusion between her and Captain Hervey—Bribery alleged—The allegation shown to be untrue—Captain Hervey's character—The story of the negotiations previous to the jactitation suit afterwards told by Mr. Caesar Hawkins, who acted as intermediary—The news spread that the Duke and Elizabeth are married.

JUDGING by the comments which followed the decision of the Ecclesiastical Court, the sole responsibility for instituting the proceedings was cast upon Elizabeth. She was in a hurry to marry the Duke of Kingston, said the critics, and was perfectly unscrupulous how she got rid of the ties that bound her to Captain Hervey. It is doubtful whether any report of the jactitation proceedings was published at the time and possibly only the result was made known ; the public were ignorant of the part Hervey played in the affair, and the whole business was so complicated and puzzling that no wonder Elizabeth was accused of bribing her husband. The accusation was a shameful one, but public opinion decided that it was the only possible explanation, or why did not Captain Hervey take the easier way of suing for a divorce ?

The truth seems to be that if Hervey had this in-

tention he afterwards abandoned it out of consideration for his wife. The few references on record of the embarrassed husband in regard to the delicate matter do not put him in an unfavourable light. Take, for instance, his letter to Mr. Grenville written on August 13th, 1768 : "I am unfortunately plunging myself in a very troublesome, disagreeable, yet I think (for me and my family) necessary business which has long employed more of my thoughts and time than my health could bestow, but to my astonishment a few months' labour (and great labour) have given me what for many years I could not obtain ; and if I succeed in the great point I shall think myself well repaid, and do not doubt but my health will be restored. As yet we are not quite forward enough to be quite certain for the last determination, and yet were we to consult ten thousand rational thinking people I am certain there would not be one ' contre ' ; but where law is concerned, there may be delicacies in points of that which are not known in equity. Excuse me saying no more ; you have ever been so much my friend, I could not say less, and were I with you I should not hesitate saying more, though my lips have never been opened about it but where it was necessary."

In September 1768 Augustus Hervey had a trouble thrust upon him more serious than the puzzle how to rid himself of his wife. His mother Lady Hervey, once the "beauteous Molly Lepel," died. Hervey's letter to Grenville, written in his somewhat laboured style, shows real feeling and affection. At this time the unsettled state of his matrimonial affairs was evidently on his mind, and he makes a guarded allusion

to the subject in the expression "little success in another part of life," which he underlines. We give the letter in full :

"As you will see the death of my poor Mother in the papers, I dare say you will be impatient to know how it may have affected my situation, since your last so kindly expresses your feeling obliged by any communication of what concerns me.

"I dined with Lady Hervey, Saturday, at Sunning Hill, where she had been complaining some days of a cold, which obliged her to come to town the Monday following late, and very much oppressed. She felt herself going some time before, as my brother tells me, in a letter she wrote him. She was blooded and blistered, and Mr. Hawkins and myself at last persuaded her to have a physician, when she consented, provided it was James.

"I never left her, though but very indifferent myself, till she expired at 4 o'clock Thursday afternoon ; in the course of her illness she never mentioned any one of her children or acquaintance, nor ever spoke to any one but Mr. Hawkins and me, when we advised about the physician ; only on Wednesday she squeezed my hand and said, "Poor dear Augustus," and never spoke afterwards, even to her maid. She felt, thank God ! no pain whatever. I sent an express for my brother, Wednesday, who came up Thursday night, and with me went on Friday morning to the House, 'he and I being reconciled' first entirely, and he has dined with me every day since.

"My mother has left her house, plate, furniture,

etc., and all her jewels, to my brother Bristol and his son ; then to me and mine ; and then to brother William for ever, cutting out the Bishop. Her money in these and other funds equally between William and myself ; to my sister Mary a little ring, and never mentioned any other sisters at all. There were two wills, the one of 1763 that left all to me, and this of last May in the manner I tell you. Some small legacies to Lady Bute, Lady Jane Macartney, Lord and Lady Holland, Mr. Walpole, etc., whom (between you and I) I believe have in some degree influenced that opinion which may have occasioned the unexpected change, but which my brother saw had no effect, nor has it on me ; he could not read the rest of the will for surprise, and I did without the least. I only know I have a satisfaction of having been the one here to continue that invariable filial affection and duty I had ever shown her, to her last sigh, and hope she is happy now. God knows how all these things are, or why anything is ; I can only say, like Desdemona, 'tis strange, 'tis wondrous strange,' and in any sense of the word our whole conditions and dispositions seem as she also says, 'pitiful, 'tis wondrous pitiful.'

"I thank God my health is surprisingly recovered, and if I have better success in *another point* of life I shall not let the disappointment of affluence affect me whilst I have the convenience as well as necessaries of life. I never loved money for the sake of money in my life, and as I have never wanted it less than at present, the lucre of gain could never induce me to follow opinions that avarice might put other people upon undertaking ; to be thought enough beloved by

her to have distinguished me, and to be thought considerable enough by the friends I am unalterably attached to, and to receive distinction through them whenever they could, is what I own I have had pride and vanity enough to desire ; but for the rest, *fortuna cetera mando*. Forgive this scrawl, and be assured I am, etc., etc.

“A. HERVEY.”

Once more, and for the last time, Captain Hervey alludes to the matter when writing to Grenville on October 31st: “I find this town has made me a much more intrepid person than I really am, for they have already given me another person for a wife, and such a one as I am sure I should never have thought of. Very likely the report may have reached you, and I am sure you will treat it as it deserves, but it has been very industriously put about here. My suit comes on this term, and I hope to have success. I am sure of you wishing me well.”

It will be noticed that Captain Hervey does not disclose the nature of his suit. It was probably his desire that the world should think he was about to commence divorce proceedings, and though no doubt divorce was his original project, he had altered his mind when writing on October 31st, as the suit for jactitation came on ten days afterwards. Captain Hervey and Elizabeth had a mutual friend in Mr. Cæsar Hawkins, who acted as an intermediary in the protracted and puzzling negotiations between husband and wife. Mr. Hawkins had to give evidence in the bigamy trial, and for the first time in what he then said

is to be found the inward history of the circumstances which led to the jactitation suit.

Mr. Hawkins's statement is lengthy, and reads as though the eminent surgeon had observed the cautiousness of his profession and had weighed every word before uttering it.

"To the best of my remembrance," he said, "Captain Hervey met me in the street, and stopped me, telling me that he should be glad if I would call on him at his house the first morning I had half an hour to spare, and if I could then fix the time he would take care to be in the way, and that no other company should interrupt the conversation. He intimated that it was not on account of his own health, but on account of an old friend of mine. I named the time and went to him. I found Captain Hervey expecting me. Upon a table, at a little distance from his right hand, there lay two or three bundles of papers, folded up as these papers are" (taking up some papers at the bar). "To these papers he often pointed in course of what he said afterwards. After making some polite apologies to me for the particular trouble he was then giving me, he told me it was on Miss Chudleigh's account; that he wished me to carry her a message upon a subject that was very disagreeable, but that he thought it would be less shocking to be carried by, and received from, a person she knew than from any stranger; that he had been for some time past very unhappy on account of his matrimonial connections with Miss Chudleigh; that he wished to have his freedom, which the criminality of her conduct, and the proofs which he had of it (which, in pointing to the

papers I before mentioned, he said he had for some time past, with intent and purpose to procure a divorce, been collecting) quite justified ; that he believed they contained the most ample and abundant proofs, circumstances, and everything relative to such proof ; that he intended to pursue his prosecution with the strictest firmness and resolution ; but that he retained such a regard and respect for her, and as a gentleman to his own character, that he wished not to mix malice or ill-temper in the course of it, but that in every respect he would wish to appear and act on the line of a man of honour and of a gentleman ; that he wished (he said) she would understand that his soliciting me to carry the message should be received by her as a mark of that disposition ; that, as most probably in the number of so many testimonial depositions as were there collected there might be many offensive circumstances named, superfluous to the necessary legal proofs, that if she pleased I might inform her that her lawyers, either with or without herself, might, in conjunction with his lawyers, look over all the depositions, and that if any parts were found tending to indecent or scandalous reflections, which his gentleman of the law should think might be omitted without weakening his cause, he himself should have no objection to it ; that, as he intended only to act upon the principles of a gentleman and a man of honour, he should hope she would not produce any unnecessary or vexatious delays to the suit, or enhance the expenses of it, as he did not intend to prosecute to gain by any demands of damages, I think, or to that purpose.

“ I delivered this message to Miss Chudleigh as well

as I could. After a little time taken for consideration I do not recollect exactly what Miss Chudleigh desired me to report to Captain Hervey; but it was to this effect : that she was obliged to him for the polite parts of his message; but, as to the subject of the divorce, she should cut that short by wishing him to understand that she did not acknowledge him for her legal husband, and should put him to the defiance of such proof; that she had then already, or should immediately institute a suit in the Ecclesiastical Court, which she called, I think, a jactitation of marriage; but, as he had promised before that he would act upon the line of a man of honour and a gentleman in his own intended suit, she hoped that he would pursue the same line now, and that he would confine himself to the proofs of legal marriage only, and not to other proofs of connections or cohabitations; if he did, that he would make it a process of no long delay, and that either he would gain an equal freedom to himself by a sentence of that Court declaring them to be free, or he would the sooner be able to institute his own intended suit. Captain Hervey received my message as one affected and struck by it, making no reply or answer for two or three minutes; then, not speaking to me, but rather seeming to express his own thoughts aloud in short sentences, that he did not conceive he should have his equal freedom by that method. I believe I should have mentioned that Miss Chudleigh desired, in part of her message, that nothing might be brought forward which might be a subject of useless conversation and scandal. He said, in reply, that he was no more inclined to bring forward anything for the lovers of

scandalous conversation only than she should be, and that if he could not establish the proof of legal matrimony (I do not remember the words, but to the sense of this), that he was too much a gentleman to bring anything before the public relative to other connections with the lady."

Coming to the jactitation proceedings, Mr. Hawkins was questioned by Mr. Dunning, the counsel for the duchess, on the subject of the suppression of evidence. The examination ran thus :

"Do you recollect whether any of these messages related to any witnesses or witness to be produced or kept back?"

"Certainly not; I never had a supposition that Miss Chudleigh would have given me such a message. Nothing appeared to me but what contained matter of little import, and of the most honourable kind."

"Did you ever observe, or do you now recollect any ground to form a belief, whether the parties had forgotten or remembered that there was then living one of the witnesses to the fact of the marriage?"

"I profess I do not recollect that: I have heard it in common conversation in the town, but not, that ever I remember, from either him or her at that time. . . . I rather (if I may say anything) understood from Miss Chudleigh that there was some loose marriage, not quite in the common manner. I think I could remember an expression of Miss Chudleigh's once, upon her speaking on the occasion. If I remember, I asked her how her suit was going on. This was towards the latter part of it. She looked grave, and desired to speak to me in another room. She said that

she had had a great deal of concern and agitation of mind since she last saw me, which I remarked to her had been for a longer interval of time on her not calling at the house upon my wife in the usual manner. Miss Chudleigh said that she had had so much concern upon what she had not expected at the commencement of her suit, from finding that a positive oath was expected from her that she was not married, and which she had for some time together apprehended would be put to her in that form, that she thought she would have dropped her suit entirely, for that she would not for the whole world have taken that direct kind of positive oath ; but that what had been offered to her had been so complicated (I think I understood) with other things that were certainly not true that she could and had taken the oath with a very safe conscience. To some questions (I do not remember the words) to Miss Chudleigh from me, how then she came to institute a suit at all, she answered me, 'Oh, for that matter [I think it was] the ceremony as done was such a scrambling, shabby business [I do not say these were the precise words, but to that purport], and so much incomplete, that she would have been full as unwilling to have taken a positive oath that she was married as that she was not married.' "

"Was anything ever said by Captain Hervey, and communicated to the lady, respecting an intention of his to appeal from this sentence?"

"I know nothing of that."

"What said Miss Chudleigh on that subject?"

"Miss Chudleigh had told me that the sentence was passed, and that it was irrevocable and final to them

two, unless Captain Hervey within a certain limited time did something to keep the cause open. I do not know what that was. That there was, she believed, some demur at that time, as Captain Hervey was not satisfied with the sentence, and had made some demands by his proctor, if I understood right, for the costs of suit which were decreed, I believe, against him."

"Do you know whether the costs of suit were ever paid by Captain Hervey?"

"I do not, but I believe they were. I was going on to say what I recollected upon that. They had some demur upon the costs of suit, but that, if Captain Hervey insisted upon it, she would give her proctor directions not to let such a thing stop the closing of the suit."

"Do you then know whether Captain Hervey, who by the terms of the sentence was to pay the costs, did not, upon this, receive the costs he had been put to in the suit?"

"I know nothing more than I have mentioned."

But most certainly the public knew less. All that was absolutely certain at the time the decree was given was that Miss Chudleigh was free to marry, and immediately the wits went to work. Lady Jane Coke, writing from Bath, says: "I will tell you some Bath wit, which they say is Miss Chudleigh's character; but I beg you'll read them to Mr. Eyre, and let him guess who they describe:

"A wife, who to her husband ne'er laid claim,
A mother, who her children ne'er dare name,
Is this a wonder? more may yet be said:
This wife, this mother, still remains a Maid!

"They are reckoned very pretty; you remember her being still a maid of honour, which explains them."

The world of fashion was all agog to know when Miss Chudleigh's marriage to the duke was to take place, but it was very slow to accept the statement that the lady was free to marry. On February 17, 1769, Lady Mary Coke makes an important entry in her Journal: "Miss Chudleigh has taken an oath that she is not Mr. Hervey's wife; and tho' everybody knows she is, as the witnesses to the marriage are all dead, she intends marrying the Duke of Kingston. 'Tis said she has bespoken a white gown to be presented in at Court, that is to be trimmed with point lace and pearl."

Walpole brings the matter to the verge of the crisis; but gives a garbled version of the state of affairs, the only value of which is that it probably represents what the public believed was the case. "After a marriage," he writes on February 28th, "of twenty years, Augustus Hervey, having fallen in love with a physician's daughter at Bath, has attacked his spouse, the maid of honour, the fair Chudleigh, and sought a divorce for adultery. Unfortunately, he had waited till all the witnesses of their marriage and of her two deliverers are dead, as well as the two children.¹ The provident virgin had not been so negligent. Last year she forced herself into the house of the parson who had married them, and who was on the point of death. By bullying, and to get rid of her, she forced the poor

¹ This is a characteristic specimen of Walpole's haphazard, slap-dash reckless way of writing. It will be noticed he speaks of *two* children—an unaccountable blunder. The Hon. Mrs. Hervey had but one.

man to give up the certificate. Since then she has appeared in Doctor's Commons, and sworn by the Virgins Mary and Diana that she never was married to Mr. Hervey. The Ecclesiastical Court has admitted her corporal oath, and enjoined silence to Mr. Hervey. Next week this fair injured innocence, who is but fifty, is to be married to the Duke of Kingston, who has kept her openly for almost half that time, and who by this means will recover half his fortune which he had lavished on her. As a proof of her purity and poverty her wedding-gown is white satin, trimmed with Brussels lace and pearls. Every word of this history is extremely true. The physician, who is little more in his senses than the other actors, and a little honester, will not give his daughter—nay, has offered her five thousand pounds not to marry Mr. Hervey; but Miss Rhubarb is as much above worldly decorum as the rest, and persists, though there is no more doubt of the marriage of Mr. Hervey and Miss Chudleigh than that of your father and mother. It is a cruel case upon his family, who can never acquiesce in the legitimacy of his children, if any come from this bigamy."

At last the all-important event takes place, and the industrious Lady Mary Coke is entitled to the honour of being the first to record the news, which she does in the fashion of the day, using the term "Mrs." which was then applied indifferently to married and unmarried ladies. Calling on the Duchess of Norfolk on March 5 she and the duchess discuss the business. "The duchess," she remarks, "seemed surprised that the Duke of Kingston cou'd think of marrying Mrs.

Chudleigh when he knew her to be Mr. Hervey's wife. 'Tis indeed wonderful, but such encouragement does vice meet with that I'm persuaded she will be visited by half the people of Fashion as soon as ever he calls her Duchess of Kingston. . . . Lord Frederick Campbell told us he heard the Archbishop had refused granting the licence for the Duke of Kingston marrying Mrs. Chudleigh."

Four days later Lady Mary writes that, while at Lord George Sackville's, "The Duchess of Ancaster told us the Duke of Kingston was married that evening. Lord Masham being in waiting had asked the King's leave not to attend him to the Oratorio, that he might give Mrs. Chudleigh away. Strange, indeed!"

Truly may one echo "Strange, indeed!"

END OF VOL. I

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